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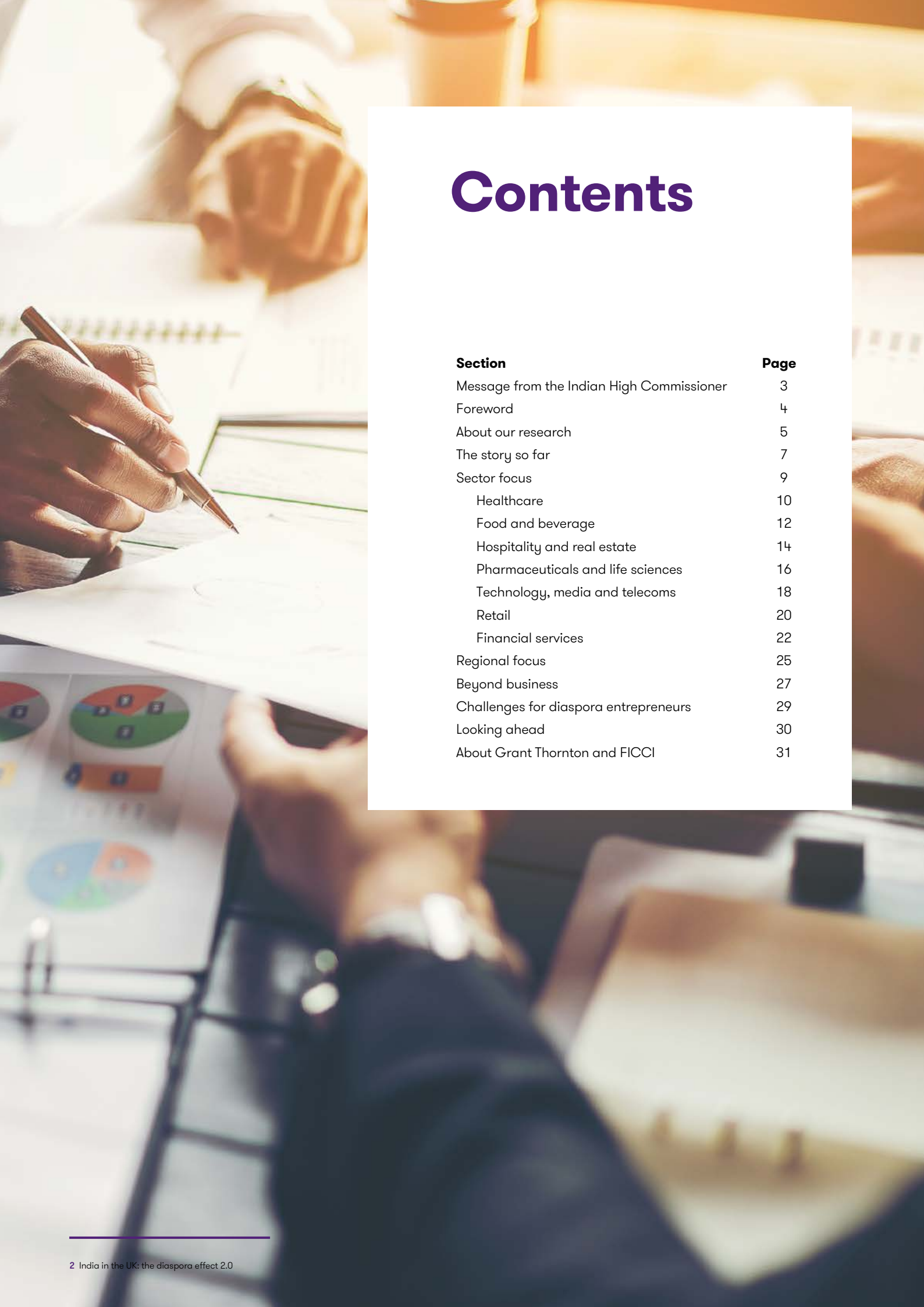
FICCI
Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry

India in the UK: the diaspora effect 2.0

Celebrating generations of diaspora success

March 2022





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भारत का उच्चायोग, लंदन
High Commission of India
London, United Kingdom

Message from the Indian High Commissioner

One of the key pillars of the strong relationship between India and the United Kingdom is the Indian diaspora - described as the "Living Bridge" by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi.

Estimated to be over 1.5 million strong today, this community is valued for its outstanding contribution in every sphere of activity - academics, literature, arts, medicines, science, sports, industry, business and politics, among others, which has been widely acknowledged with appreciation.

The Indian diaspora responded with characteristic efficiency when communities across the UK were affected by the several waves of the pandemic. As doctors, pharmacists and healthcare professionals, they single-mindedly served the stranded, the sick and vulnerable - and donated generously to save lives here and in India.

In early 2020, the High Commission of India in London had requested Grant Thornton and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry – UK (FICCI UK) to compile a report on the contribution of people of Indian origin in the UK. The first such Report was so well-received in both countries that a follow up edition was very much justified.

'India in the UK: The Diaspora Effect 2.0' reflects the journey of a cross section of exceptional entrepreneurs and professionals whose innate Indian genius is at the core of their success in a variety of sectors including – and particularly – real estate, trading, medicine, financial services and, of course, information technology.

I congratulate Grant Thornton, FICCI UK and the Economic Wing of the High Commission of India, London on the publication of this report.



Gaitri Issar Kumar
High Commissioner of India

Foreword

In February 2020, Grant Thornton's South Asia Business Group, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) and the High Commission of India collaborated to celebrate the contribution of the Indian diaspora in the UK. Our report, 'India in the UK: the diaspora effect', highlighted the contribution of the Indian diaspora across all walks of life, with a specific focus on business.

The report received an overwhelming response from businesses, government, media and other stakeholders from both the UK and India. Enthused by this response, Grant Thornton and FICCI have collaborated on a second edition. This new report looks deeper into the dynamics of the Indian diaspora's contribution. It takes a deep dive into the sectors where diaspora-owned businesses are making a sizable impact and features a series of interviews with leading diaspora entrepreneurs, both those running established businesses and others breaking new ground.

It studies the geographical spread of the Indian diaspora across the UK and explores the diaspora's contribution beyond business. It also examines some of the challenges diaspora entrepreneurs currently face. Finally, it provides some perspectives on the future, including the desire of the diaspora, particularly the next generation, to give back to India.



Anuj Chande
Partner and Head of the South Asia Business Group
Grant Thornton UK LLP



The Rt Hon. the Baroness Usha Prashar of Runnymede CBE PC
Chairperson
Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI UK Council)

About our research

The first edition of 'India in the UK: the diaspora effect' highlighted the remarkable contribution of the Indian diaspora in the UK, primarily in the business sector.

This second edition dives deeper into the economic contribution highlighted in the previous report. It also brings into the spotlight the contribution of the diaspora beyond business, including a new generation of British Indians making waves in the fields of arts, science, sports and politics.

Through intensive desk research and one-to-one interviews with Indian businesspeople, we explore the personal and professional attributes that have brought them such success in their respective sectors. Our analysis of the statistical data available also looks at the size and spread of the Indian diaspora across the UK.





Indian entrepreneurs are active in a range of sectors with the most popular being hospitality, healthcare and pharmaceuticals, retail, real estate and construction, food and beverage, technology and telecoms, and business services.

The story so far

The story of the Indian diaspora in the UK spans decades. It sees the Indian community making a growing and now significant contribution to UK life.

Over decades, relations between India and the UK have evolved against the changing contours of political and economic affairs. Today, the Indian diaspora is one of the largest migrant communities in the UK. At least 1.5 million people[1] of Indian heritage live, work and run businesses in the UK, contributing exponentially to the British economy across a spectrum ranging from finance and the professions through to the arts and culture.

In the first edition of our 'India in the UK' report, we identified approximately 654 diaspora-owned or diaspora-led companies with an annual turnover of £100,000 or more. Based on our research at the time, these companies had a combined annual turnover of at least £36.84 billion. Together, they contributed more than £1 billion in corporation tax and invested some £2 billion through capital expenditure. The largest diaspora employers – those with more than 1,000 employees – provided around 174,000 UK jobs.[2]

Since they began coming to live and work in the UK, Indians have increasingly chosen to pursue higher education and are more likely to do so compared to other ethnic minorities. This makes them highly employable. Over 50% hold degree-level qualifications while 40% work in managerial and professional occupations.[3]

Indian entrepreneurs are active in a range of sectors with the most popular being hospitality, healthcare and pharmaceuticals, retail, real estate and construction, food and beverage, technology and telecoms, and business services. Our 2020 research showed that these sectors account for 84% of all Indian diaspora-owned businesses in the UK. The remaining 16% are in financial services, engineering and manufacturing, tourism and leisure, automotive and energy, and natural resources.

1 For more detail, see page 24 "Regional focus"
2 All figures in this paragraph are from our 2020 report
3 Race in the workplace, The McGregor-Smith Review



Since the 1950s, Indians have come to the UK and contributed to the country's economic development.

Sector focus

Indian entrepreneurs in the UK have tended to build their businesses in sectors that reflect Indians' natural inclinations towards real estate, trading and medicine.

Indian entrepreneurship in the UK began many decades ago. Since the 1950s, Indians have come to the UK and contributed to the country's economic development. As well as taking up significant posts in government, academia, finance and politics, the Indian diaspora has also shown a natural flair for business, with many members setting up family businesses. Anecdotally, this stems from inherent trading skills and the determination of immigrants to improve their lives. A possible additional explanation for this phenomenon could be the barriers to career progression that even the most successful professionals of Indian origin experienced in the UK when they arrived.

The first generation of migrants set up successful small and medium-scale businesses, often employing fellow community members. Many developed these businesses into successful, larger-scale ventures during the years of rapid economic growth in the UK. Indian businesspeople who have risen to prominence in the UK include Srichand and Gopichand Hinduja (Hinduja Group), Lakshmi Mittal (ArcelorMittal), Lord Karan Bilimoria (Cobra Beer), Kartar and Tej Lalvani (Vitabiotics), Mohsin and Zuber Issa (EG Group), the Arora brothers (B&M Group) and Kuljinder Bahia (Southall Travel).

Second-generation owners are now taking up the reins in family businesses at a time when economic conditions are less favourable than the first generation might have experienced. Many are ambitious to expand their businesses in higher-growth economies and to re-establish links with India.

Indian diaspora-owned businesses in the UK tend to be concentrated in five key sectors: healthcare, food and beverage, hospitality and real estate, pharmaceuticals and life sciences and technology. This focus reflects the natural inclinations of the diaspora towards real estate, trading and medicine. Meanwhile, a growing number of diaspora entrepreneurs are establishing new ventures in financial services.

In this section of the report, we feature interviews with a range of diaspora entrepreneurs running successful businesses in these preferred sectors. We ask about the experiences that have led them to where they are now and what challenges they have faced along the way. We also ask about their vision for the future and what their advice is for a new generation of diaspora entrepreneurs coming through.

It is interesting to note the common themes that emerge in many of the interviews: the importance of family support, the determination to succeed against all odds, a strong work ethic and optimism for the future. While these stories represent just a few examples of the diaspora experience, they give a strong sense that these common themes run though the Indian diaspora community generally.

Healthcare

The health sector is one of the diaspora's most preferred areas, with care homes and private nursing attracting significant investment.

The real estate dimension of these businesses appeals to the diaspora's natural affinity with property. More recently, a new breed of diaspora entrepreneurs has been getting involved in the wellness industry, reinventing traditional Indian wellness products for a modern, UK market.

Sheilesh Shah of Aryuveda Wellness Ltd is just one example. In addition, innovations in healthcare, like the growing use of cannabidiol (CBD) products and the popularity of vaping, have seen players like Tej and Irin Maini, and Mandeep Kohli (Flawless Vape) make significant contributions to the sector.



Dr. Sanjeev Kanoria
Role: Founder and chairman
Company: Advinia Healthcare
Date established: 1997
First or second generation: First generation
Number of Employees: 3,300

Dr. Sanjeev Kanoria is well known in the UK as a liver transplant specialist turned healthcare entrepreneur.

Sanjeev Kanoria comes from a business family in Kolkata. A book he read as child inspired him with a passion to become a surgeon. After finishing his early medical training in India, he came to the UK to pursue this dream. He went on to complete his surgical training and started practising in 1987. Within three years, he had worked hard enough to attain all his fellowships by the age of 27, making him one of the youngest ever to do so.

In parallel with his surgical practice, Sanjeev's entrepreneurial passion was focused on giving back to India. Knowing the struggles people go through to get adequate treatment there, his ambition was to open a specialist hospital. To fire up his business acumen, he decided to pursue an MBA from London Business School before temporarily migrating back to India. Along with one of his colleagues from King's College London, he built a specialist liver transplant hospital in Chennai. This was enough to convince him to get some management experience before he tried to build any more hospitals himself. He went on to work with McKinsey in their healthcare and lifestyle sector.

Missing his surgical days, he decided to get back into practice. After many struggles to prove his worth, he went on to complete his PhD from UCL. During this period, he had insufficient means to support his family in the UK.

This is when, with the help of his family back in India, he bought his first care home. This led to the birth of Advinia Healthcare, which soon became one of UK's leading care home businesses. He describes this phase of his life as living three lives – as a PhD student, an entrepreneur and a surgeon. With enough experience under his belt, he left the NHS in 2011 and was the mastermind behind the founding of his family's hospital, Suasth Hospital, in Navi Mumbai.

Performing three very distinct roles was extremely demanding and, looking back, Sanjeev acknowledges that he probably wouldn't be able to do it again. He owes his success in every field to his enthusiasm to pursue all his ambitions. He also credits meditation with giving him the intrinsic soul energy to keep going. Part of the success of his care home business lies in his ability to acquire failing ones and go back to the basics to get them back on track.

He encourages young entrepreneurs in the care homes sector to have a clear view of how they will help fill the growing gap between demand and supply. He recommends collaborating with operators who have appropriate skills and experience. While he appreciates the ambition and vigour that young entrepreneurs bring to the business world, he cautions them to never surpass a certain level of economies of scale because then there are dis-economies of scope. Besides business, in life, he advises them not to ignore their body, soul and mind balance.



Akash Mehta
Role: CEO and co-founder
Company: Fable & Mane
Date established: 2019
First or second generation: Second generation
Number of Employees: 15

Akash Mehta and his sister Nikita Mehta set up Fable & Mane with the ambition to create a modern hair wellness brand.

An electronic engineer by degree, Akash Mehta gained extensive experience at Estée Lauder, LVMH and Dior before embarking on his entrepreneurial journey. Akash's father has an established business in the beauty sector, so Akash's decision to build his career in the same sector might have been expected.

He speaks of the challenges he faced during his early education because of his origin but was inspired to see his father become one of the first Indians to build a business in the UK beauty industry. The only dilemma he faced once he had chosen to become a beauty entrepreneur was whether to join his father's business or to start something of his own.

Akash was prepared for the risks that entrepreneurship brings but held a positive attitude towards the possibility of failure. Having failed the second year of his degree, he says this now feels like a blessing in disguise. It made him realise he should focus on what makes him happy. So, after going on to finish his degree, he followed his passion into the beauty industry, co-founding Fable & Mane with his sister, Nikita Mehta, who is now the business's creative director.

Since then, the pair have been working diligently in order to realise their philanthropic ambitions. Akash and Nikita have set up The Fable Fund to support local conservation initiatives and restore the habitat of wild tigers. The fund aims to raise $1 million to achieve this.

Akash's mission in life is to inspire young entrepreneurs so that they can make a difference and to convince them that, through hard work, they can achieve success sooner than they think. He aims to give a voice to people of colour and keep Indian values alive in business. He calls himself and his family 'global Indians' and advises all Indians to take their roots with them wherever they go. This is why you can find him taking comfort in traditional fare like dal roti.

Akash and Nikita have high hopes for their business and aspirations for a significant M&A, which would push Fable & Mane into the headlines. But he emphasises that, ultimately, all their efforts are about achieving their target for The Fable Fund, their greatest passion.



Indian diaspora-owned businesses in the UK tend to be concentrated in five key sectors: healthcare, food and beverage, hospitality and real estate, pharmaceuticals and technology.

Food and beverage

In the words of Professor Tulasi Srinivas, "Food in India is an identity marker of caste, class, family, kinship, tribe affiliation, lineage, religiosity, ethnicity, and increasingly, of secular group identification."[4]

It is no wonder then that the Indian diaspora's involvement in the food and drink industry is extremely dynamic. The first Indian restaurant in the UK was founded by an East India Company captain, Sake Dean Mahomet, in 1810.

Since then, thousands of Indian restaurants have opened across the UK and currently, out of the 66 Michelin-starred restaurants in London, six serve Indian cuisine.[5] Meanwhile, Indian has become one of the most popular cuisines in the UK.[6]

The demand for Indian cooking ingredients, including spices and vegetables, has given rise to many businesses dealing in them. Over the years, companies selling packaged Indian foods, such as East End Foods and Cofresh, and Indian grocery chains, such as VB & Sons, have not just catered to the tastebuds of the diaspora. They have also contributed significantly to the local economy and created jobs. Meanwhile, Indian food brands in the UK, such as Tilda Rice and Patak's, have gone global and led a quiet revolution in the UK's eating habits.



Leena Malde
Role: Executive chair
Company: Wealmoor Group
Date established: 1973
First or second generation: Second generation
Number of Employees: 1,000

Leena Malde is taking forward the horticulture business founded by her father, Rati Dhanani, in a domestic garage almost 50 years ago. From humble beginnings, horticulture business Wealmoor has grown to specialise in growing, packing and marketing subtropical fresh produce from all over the world as well as producing homegrown seasonal vegetables and herbs. This success has been down in part, at least, to Leena Malde who has taken the business to global markets. Her willingness to take risks has seen the business grow to three sites in the UK, employing over 1,000 people.

Leena was born in Kenya where her father, Rati Dhanani, had a passion for horticulture and a marketing mindset. He set up his business to bring local people together and support their social improvement. With an ambition to help more people, the entrepreneur migrated from Kenya to the UK in the early 1970s. His influence lives on in the business which follows 'The Wealmoor Way', an approach grounded in family values, vision and purpose.

Having graduated in business management, Leena initially wanted to develop a career in finance. But with the family business at a pivotal stage in the 1980s, she saw the growth opportunities for the enterprise as well as for herself within the family business. She emphasises that she was never handed a position on a plate.

She always had to prove she was capable of a role. When she looks ahead and thinks about who will succeed her, she will take the same approach. To her, a business is all about its people. That means she will always welcome a person with the right intentions and good capabilities into the organisation.

Just as her father's values inform the way she runs the business, Leena's origins are evident in her business aspirations. She has helped make Indian-grown produce, like okra, chillies and mangoes, available in the UK market. The company she runs works with growers all around the world, and also owns farming operations in many countries including here in the UK. Her Indian culture, she believes, has been an essential part of being able to cross cultural barriers, and it's this spirit that provides a platform for so many communities all over the world.

Having grown up in a very diverse environment, Leena recognises that most people have their struggles. It's important to her to remember that "everyone around us is a person". She acknowledges that the people associated with her business are key to the success she has achieved. She asks entrepreneurs coming up through the ranks to be open minded, embrace diversity of thought and integrate with society. She urges them to build a culture based on inclusivity and not nepotism, where capabilities and expertise are paramount.

4 Exploring Indian Culture through Food, asianstudies.org
5 When in London try these Michelin-starred Indian restaurants cntraveller.in, 29 January 2021
6 The 10 most popular ethnic cuisines in the UK chefspencil.com, 7 December 2019



The Indian diaspora's involvement in the food and drink industry is extremely dynamic.

Mahesh Raikar
Role: Founder and managing director
Company: Wrapchic
Date established: 2012
First or second generation: First generation
Number of Employees: 100

Mahesh Raikar spent nine years with food and hospitality giant, Compass Group, before launching Wrapchic, a growing destination for Indian food lovers in the UK.

Mahesh Raikar is a staunch Mumbaikar. He began his academic journey at the Institute of Hotel Management in Mumbai where he discovered a flair for contract catering. He got a couple of lucky breaks soon after finishing his course. But being from an entrepreneurial family, he wanted to launch his own business in contract catering. Following a few initial contracts with Indian tech companies and business parks, he quickly realised he needed some international experience. This prompted him to apply for a degree course at University of West London. Landing in Southall, he got first-hand experience of the Indian food available in the UK.

During his early days, he experienced a degree of institutional bias, but he never let this demotivate him. He was hired by one of the world's largest contract caterers, Compass Group, and worked with them for over nine years in various roles. He got recognition for his efforts and was even supported to implement one of his university projects.

He was keen to get into marketing and this prompted him to begin studying for a marketing qualification. At the peak of his career with Compass, while pursuing a course in marketing and in the middle of a recession, Mahesh decided to enter the world of entrepreneurship by starting Wrapchic. The business, which specialises in burritos with an Indian twist, filled a gap in the market and was an instant hit, especially with university students. The name comes from Mumbai slang where 'raapchick' is slang for the 'it' thing. With western palettes undergoing a change, Mahesh seized the opportunity to expand his brand in the UK.

Now with five company-owned stores and 12 franchised stores, Mahesh looks forward to realising his long-held dream of opening pilot stores in India before taking Wrapchic to a global market. Before this, he looks forward to a big moment coming soon – the opening of a Wrapchic store at Manchester airport.

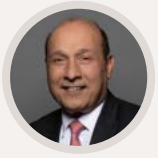
Mahesh believes that passion is the most important ingredient in enabling him to achieve his ambitions. For himself, his driving force is a desire to reduce hunger in the world through Wrapchic. In addition, he believes in the importance of timing. He emphasises that "for everything, it is about the timing of your decisions".

Hospitality and real estate

Indians have been attracted to real estate and hospitality ever since their arrival in the UK. This can be explained in part by their love of property, which they value as a tangible asset in the form of bricks and mortar that can be seen and touched.

Many members of the Indian diaspora have both residential and commercial property portfolios, ranging from one or two properties to hundreds, often owning these alongside their other businesses. It is not uncommon to hear of family-owned businesses with property portfolios worth tens of millions of pounds.

The involvement of the diaspora in the real estate sector covers both commercial and residential, in terms of investment as well as development. In addition to hospitality and care homes, they are now entering into newer areas such as student housing and co-living.



Surinder Arora
Role: Founder and chief executive
Company: Arora Group
Date established: 1999
First or second generation: First generation
Number of Employees: 2,000

Surinder Arora came to the UK in 1972 as a teenager and spent his early years in Southall. Today, he heads Arora Group, a leading name in the UK hospitality sector.

Surinder Arora credits his mother as his inspiration, and his wife and children for their support over the years. During his formative years, his mother's struggles and hard work motivated him to start working at a young age. He took up multiple jobs to help make ends meet, often working up to 18 hours a day. One year, while working with Abbey Finance and with an additional role as a junior clerk at British Airways, he found himself sitting at the back of the room at an Abbey Finance event. He resolved one day to be at the front of the room and went on to make it happen.

On the back of his early investment in a few guest houses in Heathrow, Surinder presented a proposal to create a crew hotel for British Airways at Heathrow Airport. Although his proposal was rejected at this first attempt, he kept in mind his mother's teachings of never giving up and took on the challenges as they came. He eventually tasted success, opened that first hotel and hasn't looked back since. Arora Group now operates hotels at all the London airports.

The group's business fits well with Surinder's fascination with the aviation sector. In his youth, he even wanted to become a pilot. Although financial constraints at the time meant this wasn't possible, he went on to achieve his dream in later years and earn his pilot's licence.

Surinder is self-driven and considers himself to be an opportunist rather than a strategist. He trusts in his lucky number, five, even using this to decide on the number of hotels Arora Group runs in different locations. His enthusiasm, confidence and resilience have been key in leading the group to become one of the very few qualified to build a five-star hotel at Heathrow.

He acknowledges, however, that his entrepreneurial journey hasn't always been smooth sailing. The financial crisis of 2008 hit him hard. He had sleepless nights but believes that "when you find yourself in a valley, the only way is upwards". This attitude kept him going. He determined to learn from the mistakes he made during this time. This experience helped fashion the resilience that Arora Group has shown even through the pandemic, when it was able to continue to raise money and invest in new assets.

Surinder is a businessman and a family person in equal proportions. He has kept what he learnt from his mother with him all through his life, in all his endeavours. His day starts and ends with seeing his grandchildren. Since his business is built on the values and morals of his mother, his wish is for future generations to keep his legacy growing as a family business only. His ultimate dream is to break the monopoly at Heathrow Airport and secure the contract for the next runway and terminal. Just as he never quits dreaming and working hard, he advises the next generation of entrepreneurs to always have a dream before they set out to realise it.

Many members of the Indian diaspora have both residential and commercial property portfolios



Sukhpal Ahluwalia
Role: Founder and non-executive chairman
Company: Dominvs Group
Date established: 2011
First or second generation: First generation
Number of Employees: 1,000

Sukhpal Ahluwalia was born in Uganda and emigrated with his family to the UK at the age of 13 when he and his family were expelled from there together with other British Asians in 1972. Having grown and sold one successful business, he has gone on to found one of the UK's fastest growing real estate businesses.

Sukhpal Ahluwalia describes his life journey in four phases: his childhood days in Uganda; his successful business days in the UK; a period encouraging his sons into business; and finally, "the most awaited one", his return to India.

When he emigrated to the UK, Sukhpal came with close to nothing. Early on, working in the markets of Petticoat Lane and Liverpool Street, he knew business was his calling. As an enthusiastic 18-year-old, he gathered enough funds to buy a shop selling car parts. A decade later, the shop had become Euro Car Parts and was a serious player in the market.

In 2011, Sukhpal sold the business to LKQ Corporation, who invited him to join their board. Then, with the objective of getting into real estate and hospitality, he set up the Dominvs Group. Even though the pandemic hit them hard, his sons saw opportunity in the face of adversity and decided to expand into the student residential market. Dominvs is now one of the largest student developers in the UK.

Sukhpal's ultimate aim has always been to move back to India, which he calls his true home. This means he is now gradually passing the reins over to his very capable sons, Husnell, Preet and Jay. This process will take a few more years to finalise so Sukhpal continues to look for business opportunities and to pursue his philanthropic work in India. For Indian entrepreneurs coming to the UK, his advice is to know what they want and to choose a business model that is scalable so they can use technology to its full potential in future. He strongly believes that technology will be the single most important factor for anyone seeking explosive impact from their entrepreneurial ambitions.

Pharmaceuticals and life sciences

The pharmaceuticals sector is a popular business area for the Indian diaspora. Diaspora interests here span retail, wholesale and the manufacture of medicines.

Day Lewis, Sigma Pharmaceuticals, B&S Group and Chemilines are examples of diaspora-owned retailing and wholesaling businesses, while Bristol Laboratories excels in manufacturing. An explanation of this concentration stems from the popularity of pharmacy as a qualification for many of the diaspora.

Many of the diaspora owned pharmaceutical companies have played a major role in ensuring an uninterrupted supply of medicines during the recent pandemic.



Ashok Patel
Role: Founder and chairman
Company: IPS Pharma
Date established: 2001
First or second generation: First generation
Number of Employees: 200

Ashok Patel's entrepreneurial spirit was already evident during his youth – he joined his neighbour's business straight from school and it was here that he learned his earliest lessons in entrepreneurship.

Ashok Patel was born in Nairobi and came to the UK to study pharmacy in 1975. Looking to strengthen and promote Indian values and culture, he took a keen interest in the Indian students' society at his university and went on to become its president.

His early years in the UK and the support of his family played a major role in enabling him to pursue his ambitions in the world of pharmaceuticals. Soon after his studies, wanting to learn in a small-business environment, he turned down an offer from Boots and joined a private pharmacy. This experience, along with his pharmacy studies, became the building blocks that enabled him to acquire his first two pharmacies with the help of his family. He grew the business rapidly and within 2–3 years owned six pharmacies. This dramatic expansion proved him right: the pharmaceutical sector held immense potential.

Ever since these early days, his family has been part of his success. Ashok's wife is a pharmacist and it was through her that he saw an opportunity to develop a business importing medicines from overseas. He later diverted his focus towards wholesaling. By 1995, he had been successful enough to buy his own warehouse and set up his own manufacturing unit in 2001. Despite some hiccups along the way, he adds that "today IPS Pharma is at the forefront of sourcing, manufacturing and supplying speciality pharmaceuticals to the UK and other countries".

A fond cricketer and with a sweet tooth "like a true Patel", he believes that by outsourcing some specialised tasks to Indian pharma companies, he helped bring the Indian pharma sector into the mainstream. His extensive work manufacturing antivirals for the UK government's Covid-19 programme is evidence of the reliability and reputation of the IPS brand, forged through Ashok's company's ethos of hard work, passion and relentless drive. According to Ashok: "As long as the core values, financials and fundamentals of a business are intact, then market dynamics do not matter." His advice for entrepreneurs just starting out is to keep pushing ahead even if earnings in the beginning are nominal.



Day Lewis, Sigma Pharmaceuticals, B&S Group and Chemilines are examples of diaspora-owned retailing and wholesaling businesses.

Prashant Shah
Role: CEO and co-founder
Company: co-work labs and o2h Ventures
Date established: 2018
First or second generation: First generation
Number of Employees: 500

Prashant Shah got his first taste of entrepreneurship in sixth form, when he won a competition based on entrepreneurial skills. He went on to co-found o2h Ventures, which seeds, incubates and invests in early-stage life science and technology companies.

A serial entrepreneur, with a BEng, an MSc and an MPhil in Management, Prashant Shah began his career in the strategy group at Accenture. While there, he saw the tremendous opportunities in the evolving world of technology during the dotcom boom of the late 1990s. This prompted him to set up his first venture in the tech space. The business was in expansion mode when the 2008 financial crisis hit hard and created severe challenges for Prashant. Not to be deterred, Prashant and his brother, Sunil, multitasked, cut costs and put in long hours, ultimately managing to turn around their tech venture.

Soon after, Prashant, pursuing his passion for drug discovery, went on to set up Opal Oncology, which was later acquired by a public company.

Looking for avenues to further diversify, the brothers' educational backgrounds in life sciences alerted them to the potential of life sciences clusters developing not only in Cambridge and the UK, but around the world.

Thus, o2h Ventures was born. The brothers have since gone on to build a life sciences community in the US, Japan, UK and India. The seeds for this international success were sown in Cambridge where he spent his early days, inspired by his father's passion for science and technology.

On one of his many visits to India, Prashant saw the tremendous potential of the booming pharma market in India and decided to set up o2h's first lab in Ahmedabad. Today, this lab has grown significantly and has also become a seedbed for other research entities set up by o2h alumni.

Despite the achievements of the two brothers, when it comes to their entrepreneurial journey, Prashant doesn't shy away from admitting that their disagreements are just like those between six-year-olds. Regardless, their strength lies in the trust they have that neither will wrong the other in any circumstance.

With o2h, Prashant is now seeking to merge artificial intelligence with life sciences and build a data-driven life science community worldwide. His motive every day is to keep his father's teachings with him: to be the best version of himself, to reach for and stretch his limits and to leave his mark on the world.

Technology, media and telecoms

The UK ranks as the second largest buyer of India's software exports[7] and this has drawn many Indian professionals to migrate to the UK. Indians in the UK also have strong ties to the Indian tech sector.

As a result, several diaspora members have emerged as prominent entrepreneurs in the UK's tech space, helping to fuel economic growth. Meanwhile, the contributions of the Indian diaspora in the media space are increasingly recognised in mainstream British society. In addition, diaspora members run several ethnic TV channels, radio stations, newspapers and magazines.



Diaspora members run several ethnic TV channels, radio stations, newspapers and magazines.

7 Survey on Computer Software and Information Technology-Enabled Services Exports: 2019-20, Reserve Bank of India, 16 Mar 2021



Ashok Rabheru
Role: CVO DL, chairman and founder
Company: Genisys Group
Date established: 1985
First or second generation: First generation
Number of Employees: 1,200

Ashok Rabheru emigrated from Tanzania in 1967 with barely 2.5 shillings in his pocket. This was the start of a journey that led him to Buckingham Palace where he was invested as Commander of the Victorian Order in 2011.

In his earliest jobs in the UK, Ashok Rabheru was often the only non-white person in the room. He faced racial discrimination and had to confront what he describes as "fear of the unknown". He also remembers how difficult it was to find accommodation because of his skin colour and how hard it was to track down Indian food. Yet with perseverance and hard work, he developed a central role in the IT department of one of the companies where he first worked. Since then, he has never looked back. In 1985 he founded Genisys Group with five employees. Today, the business employs over 1,200 staff. Ashok also decided to give back to his country of origin while leveraging India's IT prowess by establishing a development centre in Bangalore and creating employment opportunities.

Ashok believes that people of Indian origin born in Africa have entrepreneurship in their DNA and it was almost inevitable that he would start his own company. He began as a PC reseller after receiving his initial funding from an investor who spotted the business's potential.

He's applied the same principle himself in building his business's leadership team, backing talent and skills above all else. While he supports both the Indian and British cricket teams, on the food front, he always resorts to dosa and idli whenever he wants to find comfort in food.

He was appointed as Commander of the Victorian Order (CVO) in the 2011 New Year Honours List for his extraordinary work for The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE). He served as a trustee for DofE from 2000 to 2010 and was a core member of the steering group to raise funds for the Golden Jubilee anniversary for DofE in 2006. He still works as chairman of the joint funding board for UK and international engagements. Furthermore, he was appointed Deputy Lieutenant (DL) of Buckinghamshire in 2011.

Despite believing that the Indian diaspora in the UK could do more in local politics, and that the fragmentation of the community will increase in future, he has high hopes of the next generation. In his words: "Our commitment to always finishing a task at hand, values of caring for others and the commendable family ethics are a perfect formula for driving the Indian diaspora to the forefront of British society." He advises budding entrepreneurs to pursue their dreams and never to close themselves in a shell, even when they experience knock-backs. Hard work will always win through!



Nikhil Shah
Role: CEO
Company: S-Cube
Date established: 2014
First or second generation: Second generation
Number of Employees: 10

Tech entrepreneur Nikhil Shah was named 'Young Entrepreneur of the Year 2019' by Asian Business Awards and 'Innovation Finalist 2020' by Lloyds National Business Awards.

Born and brought up in the UK, Nikhil Shah was surrounded by diversity at school. He is pleased to have absorbed both British and Indian values which he says encourages him to keep an open mind for the free flow of thoughts.

Nikhil read Mathematics at the University of Cambridge and completed his doctorate at Imperial College London. For this, he researched algorithmic developments in the theory of seismic imaging by waveform inversion. After working with energy business Chevron in California, Nikhil embarked on his entrepreneurial journey and founded S-Cube. Coming from a successful business family, Nikhil chose to build his own business in a completely different domain. His innovative tech start-up brings together world-leading researchers to develop a next-generation data processing platform for uncovering profitable drilling sites.

Under his leadership, the company has struck key partnerships with Amazon Web Services and Halliburton and rolled out its proprietary technology to early adopters such as Chevron and Woodside.

Nikhil says he grew up knowing the value of money. "My parents gave me and my sister an insight into setting the foundation for creating our own success," he says.

Nikhil says that competing against larger players is quite challenging for a tech start up business like his but also massively rewarding solving problems with new technological breakthroughs. The art of negotiating and getting deals over the line are qualities that he carries from his family upbringing. The vast network that his parents built over the years played an important role in the growth of Nikhil's own company. The young businessman advises new entrants to work out how they can set themselves apart from the competition and build a brand. He also advises them to ensure they are at the forefront of innovation in their sector and fill the gaps that are left by larger organisations.

Retail

With a strong heritage in trading, many Indians who have come to live and work in the UK have focused their entrepreneurial instincts on retail and wholesale.

Starting with corner stores and progressing to run large retail empires, the Indian diaspora has made this sector its own.

Prime examples of successful diaspora-owned businesses include variety discounter B&M Retail, perfume wholesalers Shaneel and Per-Scent, and fashion retailer Boohoo.com. Last year, the Issa brothers' acquisition of Asda for £6.8 billion made headlines.



Simon Arora
Role: CEO
Company: B&M Retail
Date established: 1978
First or second generation: Second generation
Number of Employees: 31,000

Simon Arora is credited with transforming B&M Retail from a 21-store business into the FTSE-100 company that it is today.

A graduate of Cambridge University, Simon started his career with McKinsey in London. However, soon after getting married, he moved back to Manchester to start his entrepreneurial journey there and follow in the footsteps of other family members. This was a decision made early, but he emphasises that, for him, entrepreneurship was always a question of 'when' and not 'if'.

He started his journey running a distribution business, Orient Sourcing Services, for five years. He enjoyed an early-mover advantage, but soon realised there would be limited long-term opportunities with this endeavour. Keeping in mind his parents' teaching that ambition is the most important ingredient in success, he decided to take the business to the next level and acquired B&M along with other family members. Over the years, he has been successful in running the business through three different business models, starting with a family-owned business, then with private equity shareholding and finally a listing on the London Stock Exchange.

The experience has been both enriching and instructive. Explaining the main reasons for the tremendous success of B&M over the years, he says, "What is important is appropriate delegation of work to those who are better at it than you."

For example, he acknowledges candidly that his store managers are much better at handling stores every day than he is. Commenting on the often-seen family feuds over business, he proudly applauds the synergy among his siblings. He remarks that the key is their trust in each other's judgement and respect for the boundaries set around each other's responsibilities.

He strongly believes that the UK is a great place to be an entrepreneur and Manchester has a special place in his heart. He actively promotes the city through his role as chair of the Manchester India Partnership and has an important message for entrepreneurs: "There is a lot more to the UK than London."

He says that if the idea and ambition are right, then the UK offers all the support needed to build a business. He advises budding entrepreneurs not to be afraid to ask for support and to link up with partners to achieve more. Though a business idea needs to be credible and genuine, he recommends keeping it simple. He is a strong believer in the old saying, 'simplicity is the best form of sophistication'. Being deeply proud to be of Indian origin, he tries his best to give back to his roots through his family foundation as well as helping other Indian firms to set up in the UK.



Sanjiv Mehta
Role: Chairman and CEO
Company: The East India Company
Date established: 2010
First or second generation: First generation
Number of Employees: 50

Sanjiv Mehta is an India-born British businessman and the owner of the historic East India Company.

Sanjiv's journey began in India; upon graduating from Mumbai University with a degree in finance he travelled to the United States to study Gemmology, intent on joining the family diamond trading business upon his return. Sanjiv's ambition extended beyond just the jewellery business, and over the years he built an international trading business across a range of products, including metals, petrochemicals, FMCG, coffee and tea – which ultimately led him to a professional introduction to The East India Company (EIC).

Sanjiv Mehta felt an intuitive emotional engagement with the company, spending the next 18 months in studying and better understanding the Company's history, not only in India and the United Kingdom, but in other areas where the company had influence, including Singapore, Hong Kong, and Boston. These experiences formed the basis for both the acquisition of The East India Company from its existing shareholders, and the decision to position The East India Company as a global luxury brand.

Sanjiv set about charting a course from a historical name to a tangible brand for the company. Building on the Company's stories, history, and legacy, he and his core team launched (rather re-launched) The East India Company with a Fine Foods offer, from a flagship store in London's Mayfair. The business has since expanded internationally, and has continued to follow its customer, moving beyond physical retail to digital commerce. Sanjiv believes: "The East India Company holds limitless opportunities across many products, sectors and countries. We are determined to capitalize on the pedigree and heritage of our brand."

Sanjiv is passionate about what he has achieved with the EIC brand so far and its potential for the future. He emphasises that he is not the creator of the brand, but a witness to, and a custodian of, its 400-year history. His advice to upcoming Indian-diaspora entrepreneurs and companies is to focus on opportunities without losing one's own heritage and culture. There will be mistakes and missteps, but what creates success is learning and improving on the past, rather than letting the past be a burden. The world continues to change quickly, and focusing on collaboration, opening oneself to diverse experiences and points of view, with tolerance allows for sustainable success.

Financial services

The entry of Indian-diaspora entrepreneurs into the financial services sector is a relatively new phenomenon. The genesis of this trend lies in the ambition of second-generation Indians in the UK to put to good use the professional experience they have gained working in the sector.

Wealth created through the family business has also created opportunities to invest in new business ventures, including mezzanine financing and family office investment vehicles.

First-generation entrants who have tasted success in the financial services sector have also looked to get on the entrepreneurial bandwagon in some of the newer areas, including wealth management, fintech and RegTech. These include our interviewees Amit Kotha, who has recently set up Beryllus Capital, and Rishi Khosla, who set up OakNorth Bank. Meanwhile the investment of the Dhamecha Group into Cynergy Bank also paves the way for more diaspora successes going forward.



Rishi Khosla
Role: Co-founder
Company: OakNorth Bank
Date established: 2013
First or second generation: First generation
Number of Employees: 200

Even as a young boy, Rishi Khosla knew he wanted to build his own business. His hunger to achieve and his full conviction in his ideas have pushed him to success.

Rishi Khosla describes himself as a mediocre student who didn't make much effort during his school and undergraduate days. However, once he became commercially aware and clear about what he wanted to achieve, he geared up and worked hard to achieve a master's degree from London School of Economics (LSE).

The idea for OakNorth Bank, which Rishi launched with his co-partner, Joel Perlman, came when the duo founded their first enterprise, Copal, a finance research company. "We were very cash strapped and wanted to get a loan from one of the commercial banks in the UK, but they never gave us the time," he says. After parting ways with Copal, the entrepreneurs decided to create a business that would solve the problems that they themselves had faced as entrepreneurs. With an aim to change the fundamentals of client service in commercial banking, OakNorth Bank was born.

OakNorth Bank focuses mainly on senior bank debt and growth debt risk. It has funded a number of high-growth businesses in the UK, in sectors varying from technology to hospitality and real estate. Today, it is the first unicorn venture – a privately held start-up valued at over $1 billion – to be jointly owned by a British Indian. Of the unicorn badge, Rishi says, "It's nice, but it's not important. It's not what drives us. We build businesses for life, from generations."

Rishi stresses the importance of having the right team – people who believe in your mission – and of recruiting people from different walks of life. He says, "Diversity of thinking is essential because, without that, you won't take the best decisions." Another important factor in his success is the support the government offers to encourage entrepreneurs to do business in the UK.

His mantra for success is never to have a plan B. He says, "When you are all in, you increase the probability of achieving what you want as you have no option to fall back on. The only way to go is forward."



Amit Kotha
Role: Founder and managing director
Company: Beryllus Capital
Date established: 2021
First or second generation: First generation
Number of Employees: 50

Amit Kotha has been at the forefront of advising wealthy families for almost two decades. His new venture, Beryllus Capital, aims to bring about a paradigm shift in the private client financial advisory space.

Amit Kotha came to the UK in the early 2000s with his father, who was a diplomat in the Indian High Commission in London and was instrumental in supporting his son with his career aspirations. He began his career with a short stint at ICICI Bank. Here, his work got noticed and he soon had the opportunity to join Citibank. Over the next five years, he created a name for himself in the South Asian HNWI community in the UK.

When the economic crisis battered Citibank in 2008, Amit moved to Royal Bank of Canada, rising through the ranks to become one of the bank's youngest managing directors in 2013. Today, he is one of the most trusted wealth management advisors for the South Asian Ultra High Net Worth (UHNW) community in London and features regularly in 'top 10' lists of UNHW advisers. He was also nominated Best Private Banker of the Year by Spear's in 2015 and 2017.

Though Amit has worked with several banks, the one constant has been his will to work for the right reasons – that is, for the client. This is the principle behind his new venture, Beryllus Capital, which is supported by the Hinduja Group and Focus Financial Partners. Here, he is looking to build on the trust and belief of his clients by offering them a one-stop shop for all their investment needs.

Amit loves challenge, something that is evident in his decision to embark on an entrepreneurial journey – he is the first in his family to follow this route. He is grateful in equal proportions to his motherland, India, and his "work land", the UK, and thus, aims to keep India as the focus of his philanthropic work, both at a personal level and through his organisation. He is driven by "passion with purpose" and aims to help improve girls' education and development, support the underprivileged and back infrastructure development.

He believes there are many ways to give back and says his new venture will concentrate on raising capital funds for India-specific deals and environmental, social and governance-focused investments. For budding entrepreneurs, his advice is to be passionate in what they do, to have a purpose and to be well prepared by carrying out thorough research.

Regional focus

The Indian diaspora in the UK continues to be concentrated in London and the West Midlands, even as it grows in size.

People of Indian heritage make up the largest immigrant community in the UK, accounting for 2.5 per cent of the population in England and Wales.[8] Research for our 2020 report revealed that the diaspora numbers around 1.5 million. In fact, it's likely this figure is significantly higher. The 1.5 million figure comes from the 2011 census for England and Wales,[9] with full data from the 2021 census yet to be published.

The diaspora is expanding

Given the decade that has passed since 2011, there's widespread agreement that the current size of the diaspora is likely to be closer to 1.7 million. Various data support this. For example, ONS data shows that the number of first-generation Indians in the UK has increased from 0.5 million to almost 0.9 million over the past 16 years.[10]

Elsewhere, research finds that almost half a million people born in India have migrated to the UK over the past decade or so.[11] In addition, India is the most common country of birth for migrants coming to the UK, accounting for over 9% of all immigrants in 2019.[12]

Second-generation immigrants are in the ascendent

A closer look at two of these figures reveals the evolving make-up of the diaspora. If 0.9 million of the 1.7 million-strong diaspora were born in India[13], then almost all the remaining 0.8 million[14] are second-generation or even third-generation immigrants – born in Britain but typically retaining strong cultural ties to India. These new generations are already emerging as a powerful force both in business and beyond, as this report demonstrates.

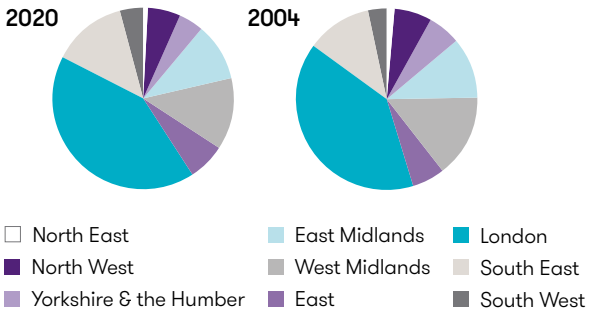


8 Population of England and Wales, www.gov.uk, 1 August 2018
9 Population of England and Wales, www.gov.uk, 1 August 2018
10 Population of the UK by country of birth and nationality, Office for National Statistics
11 Bloomberg Migration Index
12 Migrants in the UK: An Overview, The Migration Observatory, 6 November 2020
13 Migrants in the UK: An Overview, The Migration Observatory, 6 November 2020
14 A small number of the remaining 0.8 million may have immigrated from East Africa

Indian communities are spreading

These changes in the size and make-up of the diaspora are not reflected in its regional distribution. Largely speaking, Indian communities still tend to live and work in the same regions they preferred 15 years ago. London remains the most popular region and the West Midlands the second most popular. The region where members of the Indian diaspora are least likely to live is still the North East.[15]

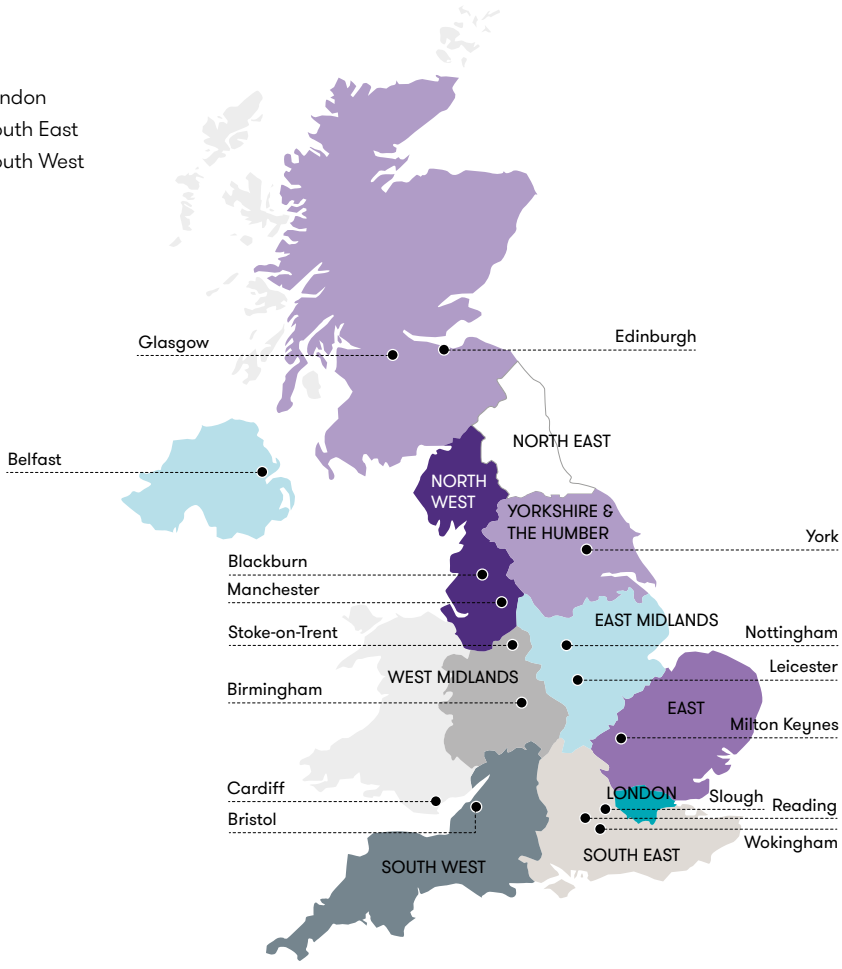
Indian diaspora in the UK by region



Within the UK regions, Leicestershire, Buckinghamshire and Hampshire have long hosted Indian communities. Meanwhile, cities and large towns such as Cardiff, Slough, Leicester and Nottingham have been major hubs for the Indian diaspora for many years.

Even though these traditional preferences remain strong, we now see the diaspora spreading to new locations – typically to take up work opportunities or to find good schooling. Counties such as Derbyshire, Essex, Kent, Surrey, Warwickshire and West Sussex all have developing Indian communities. Meanwhile more and more of the Indian diaspora are choosing to settle in cities and towns such as Reading, Wokingham, Milton Keynes, Bristol, Stoke-on-Trent, York and Blackburn.

Diaspora spread regionwise and citywise



15 Population of the UK by country of birth and nationality, Office for National Statistics, 25 Nov 2021

Beyond business

Members of the Indian community are now influential across a wide range of areas in British society.

The impact of the UK's vibrant Indian diaspora isn't confined to business. With their talent and determination, members of the diaspora have also made remarkable contributions in fields such as politics, law, science and medicine, research and innovation, academia, media and the arts, food and sports.

Additionally, the diaspora have achieved great success and broken records in unchartered territories; a prime example is that of Captain Harpreet Chandi, a 32-year-old Indian-origin British Sikh Army officer, also known as Polar Preet, who created history by becoming the first woman of colour to complete a solo unsupported trek to the South Pole.

Politics

Politicians of Indian origin have a growing profile in UK politics. Currently, two of the four Great Offices of State are held by members of the Indian diaspora: Rishi Sunak is Chancellor of the Exchequer and Priti Patel is Home Secretary. Alok Sharma, COP26 president, also serves in the Cabinet.

There are 15 Indian origin members in the House of Commons and over 25 peers in the House of Lords, which compares favourably to the Indian origin population percentage.

These modern politicians follow in the footsteps of the first Indian members of parliament in the UK: Dadabhai Naoroji in 1892, Mancherjee Bhownagree in 1895 and Shapurji Saklatvala in 1922.



Law

Ever since the pre-Independence era, the UK has drawn Indian law students and professionals to its shores. One of the most notable is Mahatma Gandhi who studied law in London in the 1890s and worked at the Inner Temple. Over the years, British Indians have made significant contributions to the UK's legal system. From judges to Attorney Generals, they have held key positions.

The Rt Hon Lord Justice Singh is the first Indian-origin judge to be promoted to one the most senior posts in the UK judicial system; he was appointed Lord Justice of Appeal in 2017. Other prominent legal professionals of Indian heritage include HHJ Kaly Kaul QC, who was appointed a Circuit Judge in 2015, and HHJ Anuja Dhir QC, who was appointed as a judge at the Old Bailey in 2017. She is the first non-white judge to sit at this court. Currently, The Rt Hon Suella Braverman QC MP holds the office of Attorney General.

Science and medicine

Over 32,000 NHS staff are of Indian origin, making them the largest group of non-UK nationals working in the NHS.[16] During the pandemic, they have been on the front line in the fight against Covid-19, caring for patients despite themselves being among the most vulnerable groups.[17] As an example, Divya Chadha Manek of the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) has been leading the UK's clinical research initiatives and was made an OBE for services to government during the Covid-19 response.[18]

The winner of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2009, Sir Venkatraman Ramakrishnan, is one of the most prominent names from the diaspora. The India-born American and British structural biologist is a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge and served as the President of the Royal Society between 2015 and 2020.

Professor Ajit Lalvani, Chair of Infectious Diseases at Imperial College London, is another example of a diaspora scientist who is making a significant contribution in the UK and globally through his research into tuberculosis and malaria vaccines and treatment.

Professor Jaspal Kooner from the Imperial College is leading the South Asia Biobank Research study comprising of around 180,000 people of South Asian origin, in respect of heart and diabetes conditions which are more prevalent within the community.

Media and the arts

British Indians now occupy important positions in the mainstream British media, both on screen and in print. They include the BBC's first media editor, Amol Rajan, the Channel 4 news presenter, Krishnan Guru-Murthy, and the BBC news presenter, Naga Munchetty. Babita Sharma anchors bulletins for the BBC News Channel while Anita Rani is a widely recognised radio and TV presenter.

Talented young artists in the UK are showcasing Indian culture through their art forms. Classical dancers, including Arunima Kumar, Aakash Odedra, Sonia Sabri and Ash Mukherjee, have been reviving the centuries-old Indian classical dances of Kuchchipudi, Kathak and Bharatnatyam. Shobana Jayasingh has become a renowned choreographer, narrating stories through inspirational movements.

Born in Mumbai and now based in London, Sir Anish Kapoor CBE, RA is a British-Indian sculptor specialising in installation and conceptual art. Rising printmaker Natasha Kumar's makes works inspired by her Indian heritage.

With Bollywood filmmakers increasingly shooting in the UK, British-Indian faces have been appearing on the big screen. London-based actors Nisha Aaliya, Bhavin Seth and Banita Sandhu have appeared in blockbusters like Shakuntala Devi, Bell Bottom and Sardar Udham Singh. Meanwhile actors like Dev Patel and Kunal Nayyar are charming audiences in Hollywood. In the UK, Nina Wadia OBE is widely recognised for her roles in films like Namastey London and, most recently, her appearance on Strictly Come Dancing.

16 NHS staff from overseas: statistics, House of Commons Library, 20 September 2021
17 High-risk Covid gene more common in South Asians, bbc.co.uk, 4 November 2021
18 Queen's Birthday Honours: Divya Chadha Manek receives OBE for vaccine development, inews.co.uk, 1 June 2021

British Indians are coming to prominence in the music industry. Singer songwriter Jay Sean has a string of awards and nominations to his name and collaborates with popular names from the industry. Meanwhile, London-based Hyphen, Leicester star Jay Milli, Nayana IZ, Asha Gold and Birmingham-born rap artist, Jagga, are all captivating audiences.[19]

Popular cultural centres like The Nehru Centre and The Bhavan, both in London, bring India to the UK's doorstep with events in music, dance, literature and more. Since 1989, Tamasha has been a home for British-Indian artists, offering them a launchpad for their careers in cinema and theatre. Media platforms like iGLOBAL, founded by Manoj Ladwa, voice the achievements and concerns of the Indian diaspora within the country.

The Scottish Indian Mahila Cultural Centre and the Overseas Maharashtrian Professionals and Entrepreneurs Group aim to boost self-esteem and confidence among South Asians, and especially women, in the UK.

The world of literature includes notable writers of Indian descent. Novelist Sanjeev Sahota was longlisted for the 2021 Booker Prize for Fiction while Nikesh Shukla is an award-winning author who explores the immigrant experience. The UK is also home to The Good Literacy Agency, set up to represent writers of colour and those without a voice in the mainstream.

Authors like Sonia Faleiro and Nikita Lalwani have been combining British and South Asian influences in their work.

Culinary

Indian-origin chefs have been catering to the culinary cravings of gastronomes ever since Indians began settling in the UK. Cyrus Rustom Todiwala OBE, DL of Café Spice Namasté has emerged as a celebrity television chef. Vineet Bhatia of Rasoi has been awarded the Michelin Star twice, making him the first Indian to achieve this accolade. Asma Khan of Darjeeling Express in London's Covent Garden runs her kitchen staffed only by Indian women experienced in preparing home-style food. Chef Chet is revolutionising Indian cuisine at BiBi in London's Mayfair. Meanwhile Rahul Mandal and Chetna Makan have participated in the TV show, Great British Bake-Off, with the former winning the 2018 series.

Sport

Sportsmen and women of Indian origin play a growing role in British sports. In football, Dilan Markanday made his professional debut with Tottenham Hotspur in 2021, becoming the first player of Indian descent to play in the first team. In 2015, Aditi Singh Chauhan became the first woman footballer of Indian origin to be signed by a top English club (West Ham).[20] And, in 2017, footballer Neil Taylor joined Aston Villa. During his career, he has earned over 40 caps playing for Wales. He was part of their squad which reached the semi-finals at UEFA Euro 2016 and also represented Great Britain at the 2012 Olympics on home soil. Most recently, Ngangom Bala Devi became the first Indian to join the Scottish club, Rangers.

In cricket, British-born Isa Guha, a former England cricketer, now fronts cricket coverage for the BBC. Meanwhile Haseeb Hameed, who has his roots in Bharuch Gujarat, became the youngest debutant ever to open for England in a Test match, in 2016. He was selected for the 2021–22 Ashes.

19 10 Best Emerging British Asian Music Artists, desiblitz.com, 16 August 2021
20 11 Footballers of Indian Origin That Are Testing International Waters, homegrown.co.in, 15 February 2017

Challenges for diaspora entrepreneurs

Today, the traditional cultural values that enabled the first generation of Indians in the UK to achieve so much serve as the foundations for a new generation looking to realise their own ambitions. Qualities such as a strong work ethic, commitment to family, respect for elders and an emphasis on education give second-generation British-Indians a strong platform for their entrepreneurial endeavours. They combine this with experience of growing up in the UK and greater familiarity with British society. This dual heritage makes them a formidable cohort, with extraordinary potential to contribute to the UK's growth and development.

While the second generation are still shaped by traditional values, their aspirations and attitudes are very different to those of their parents. The first generation that settled in the UK tended to be opportunistic – seizing their chances where they could find them. The second generation are more strategic in their thinking – able to look further ahead and plan for success accordingly.

They also differ from their parents in terms of the sectors they are interested in. Those sectors where their parents started out, such as retail and textiles, are now less appealing. Instead, the second generation is more likely to be drawn to sectors such as wellness, digital, fintech and many more new-age ones. Some use their UK education to launch successful professional careers in banking, finance, law and medicine – a real cause for celebration.

Succession planning has become more complex

This shift in the preferences and capabilities of the second generation has made succession planning more complex for first-generation business owners. Many had assumed, or at least hoped, that their children would take over the business. But in many cases, this doesn't come to pass. The temptation is to hang on and hope sons and daughters change their minds. But by delaying effective succession planning owners often fail to realise the full value of a business built with such hard work. Developing a suitable exit strategy in good time allows business owners to enjoy the full rewards of their endeavours.

Business is changing

Where sons and daughters do join the business, changing social attitudes often create new tensions. For example, women are playing a more active role in business and this may be difficult for the first generation to accept. In addition, in businesses run by brothers, wives may often seek to get involved, complicating things further.

Sibling rivalry can be an issue too. Where once the eldest sibling's decision was not challenged, younger siblings today want more say. Brothers and sisters may not be able to agree on decisions or work together effectively.

The two different generations may disagree on approach too. The second generation is typically more open to bringing in outside capital, either by accepting private-equity investment or targeting a public listing, to drive growth. In this, they often meet resistance from the first generation. Second-generation British-Indians are also likely to value their free time and weekends more and prioritise their children in a way that the first generation didn't or couldn't. Seeing this, the first generation may question their children's work ethic.

Establishing governance structures and a clear code of ethics for the business can take the heat out of the tensions created by these differences. Developed with an understanding of and empathy for Indian culture, a more formal framework can help set family-run enterprises on a firmer footing for growth and success in the modern world.

British-Indians can be the UK's best ambassadors

The Indian diaspora has already made a significant impact in the UK, evidenced by the 50 or so people of Indian heritage, including academics, community champions and healthcare experts, who appeared on the 2022 New Year Honours List. They include British Indian academic and House of Lords peer Ajay Kumar Kakkar, now Lord Kakkar KBE, and Shalina Khemka, who becomes a CBE for services to entrepreneurship and the economy.[21]

The diaspora's achievements to date could be just the beginning. As India becomes an increasingly important force globally and the UK voices its desire to strengthen its long-standing ties with India, the Indian diaspora is perfectly positioned to act as a living bridge between the two countries. Current generations in particular have been described as Britain's best ambassadors in India and have a key role to play in attracting Indian investment into the UK. With women playing an increasing role in business, the full potential of diaspora can be deployed to expand and enrich its contribution. Some 60 years after Indians started to settle in the UK, this decade offers an exceptional opportunity.

21 British Indian academics, community champions, healthcare experts receive Queen's honours, iglobalnews.com, 1 January 2022

Looking ahead

The story of the Indian diaspora in the UK is still only beginning. Many more opportunities to thrive and prosper lie ahead. The diaspora's accomplishments are noteworthy, yet there is still more that can be achieved. What needs to change to make that happen?

Talent above all else

The gender gap, still evident in many areas of business, is particularly acute in diaspora-owned businesses. Despite the success of a few women trailblazers, sectors where British-Indians like to build businesses – like hospitality, real estate and pharmaceuticals – are still largely dominated by men. However, by excluding women, or at least making it difficult for them to contribute, diaspora-owned businesses risk leaving a vast resource of talent untapped.

Similarly, there's a tendency for diaspora-owned entrepreneurs to look only to their own community when they have posts to fill in the business and on the leadership team. But by not looking beyond the diaspora, they can end up losing out on the right talent, with a negative impact for long-term performance. In short, putting talent above all else is vital for diaspora-owned businesses that are serious about the future.

More opportunities for Indian graduates

Indian students coming to the UK constitute a key component of the living bridge between the two countries. Diaspora-owned businesses can look to provide these students with worthwhile exposure to the working environment in the UK as a complement to their educational experience. This will boost students' self-confidence and equip them to contribute to the expansion of business and trade ties between India and the UK. Extending schemes like the new Graduate Route, which offers two-year post-study work visas to Indian students, would have an important positive impact and diaspora-owned businesses can look to leverage this to their advantage.

Philanthropy as a way of business

The philanthropic urge among the Indian diaspora is strong. The pandemic, in particular, saw a large flow of donations back to loved ones at home as India saw some of its darkest days. This generosity highlights the potential for the diaspora to have still more impact by making philanthropy an intrinsic part of their businesses, not something expressed only in times of crisis. With ongoing programmes to support people in need back home, charities like Akshaya Patra, British Asian Trust and Pratham UK point the way.

Getting into local politics

In the UK's most recent general election in 2019, 15 British-Indians were elected to the UK parliament[22], the country's most ethnically diverse ever.[23] Politicians like Rishi Sunak and Priti Patel hold high-profile positions in the current administration.

Across local government, the picture is less clear. Representatives from South Asian ethnic groups account for around five percent of councillors.[24] But figures that break down this statistic into different South Asian communities are hard to come by. Nevertheless, by increasing their involvement in local politics, British-Indians have a huge opportunity to work for the advancement of the diaspora in the UK and represent diaspora interests at grassroots level.

Writing the next chapter

The story of the Indian diaspora in the UK is still only beginning. Entrepreneurs of Indian origin, many of them born in the UK, are building on the achievements of previous generations and bringing fresh energy and ideas to new fields of business. Meanwhile creative professionals, scientists, politicians and sportsmen and women from the diaspora are all making a growing impact across British society. It will be fascinating to watch the next chapter in the diaspora's story unfold.

22 15 Indian-origin MPs in new UK Parliament, Times of India, 14 December 2019
23 Election 2019: Britain's most diverse Parliament, bbc.co.uk, 17 December 2019
24 Ethnic Minority Representation in UK Local Government, Professor Maria Sobolewska and Dr Neema Begum

About Grant Thornton and FICCI

Grant Thornton

We're a business adviser that helps organisations navigate today's volatile markets, has a strong focus on quality and delivers insights to succeed.

We help businesses to achieve their objectives. We work with the public sector to build thriving communities, as well as with regulators and financial institutions to build trust and integrity in markets.

We understand what you need today and what you'll need tomorrow. And we tailor our service to get you there.

Our South Asia Business Group works closely with South Asian diaspora businesses and businesses in the India-UK corridor and has done so for over three decades. We work with clients to create, protect and transform value by helping them to:

- identify growth opportunities in the UK and South Asia, whether they are an Indian organisation or a UK business looking to expand internationally
- manage potential risks to protect their organisation and assets while ensuring the complexities of international regulatory requirements are always met
- achieve lasting success by helping them reach their true potential in each market.

Our deep understanding of South Asian culture means we empathise with customs and attitudes in business and social contexts. We are widely recognised as one of the leading international firms advising on India-related matters.

Our Indian diaspora clients include many of those featured in the report. Notable examples include Cobra Beer, Euro Car Parts, New Demipower and Vitabiotics. Over the years we have helped them and others with growth plans including acquisitions advice but also manage their risks and protect their assets through various assurance and compliance services.

FICCI

Established in 1927, FICCI is the largest and oldest apex business organisation in India. Its history is closely interwoven with India's struggle for independence, its industrialisation, and its emergence as one of the most rapidly growing global economies.

A non-government, not for profit organisation, FICCI is the voice of India's business and industry.

From influencing policy to encouraging debate, engaging with policy makers and civil society, FICCI articulates the views and concerns of industry. It serves its members from the Indian private and public corporate sectors and multinational companies, drawing its strength from diverse regional chambers of commerce and industry across states, reaching out to over 250,000 companies.

FICCI provides a platform for networking and consensus building within and across sectors and is the first port of call for Indian industry, policy makers and the international business community.



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