

Stories of Rise

As this year comes to a close, one truth stands out with unmistakable clarity: narratives do not merely describe the world we live in; they shape the world we leave behind.

2025 unfolded against a backdrop of rapid change, contested truths, and heightened scrutiny. Institutions were tested. Leaders were held to account. And communication, more than ever, emerged as a force that could either steady societies or fracture trust. In this context, reputation became the true currency of progress.

PRana in September reflected that reality. It was not a celebration of achievement alone, but a forum for reckoning. Across reputation conversations, ideas of innovation, sustainability, and entrepreneurship were explored, and a shared understanding emerged – growth without credibility is fragile, and progress without purpose is hollow. India's rise, if it is to endure, must be rooted in responsibility as much as ambition.

What was most striking at PRana were diverse voices that spoke with nuance. Policymakers are thinking beyond electoral cycles.

Entrepreneurs balancing scale with stewardship. Grassroots leaders are reminding us that impact is most powerful when it reaches the margins. These were not idealistic conversations; they were pragmatic, urgent, and grounded in lived realities.

For communicators, the implications are profound. We are no longer passive conveyors of information. We are participants in the public record. The choices we make about framing, emphasis, and silence shape trust, legitimacy, and memory. In an age of acceleration, our greatest discipline must be accuracy. Our greatest ethic must be integrity. Our greatest currency is trust and reputation is mainstream.

As we look to the year ahead, the question is not whether India's story will be told. It will. The question is whether it will be told honestly, with depth, and with moral clarity. That responsibility rests with all of us who shape narratives for a living, the storytellers who can find and tell and public relation practitioners who are partners to businesses to solve for businesses.

If we hold that line consistently and without compromise, India's reputation will not need amplification. It will speak for itself.

Highlights from PRana 2025

PRana 2025 was an assessment of where India stands as it enters a decisive phase of growth. Across four conversations through reputation, innovation, sustainability, and entrepreneurship, the focus was not on ambition but on accountability. India is no longer judged solely by potential. It is judged by choices, by execution, and by the credibility it brings to the global stage.

PRana 2025 was informed by
PRCAI's Research
on reputation capital.

What follows captures those discussions.

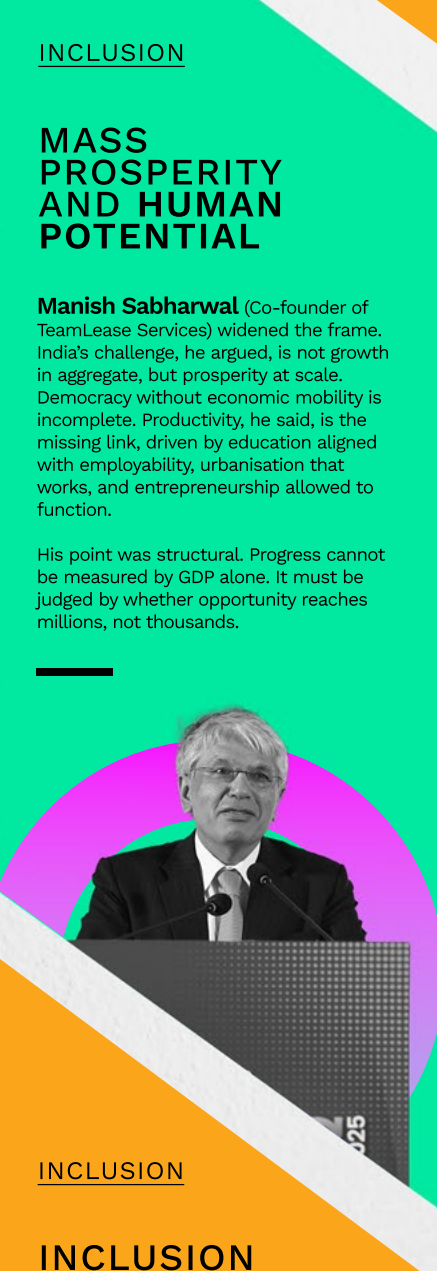


SUSTAINABILITY

NET ZERO IS NET POSITIVE

The opening argument was direct and unambiguous. India's green transition is not a cost. It is an economic strategy.

Jayant Sinha (former Minister of State for Finance & Civil Aviation and President, Eversource Capital) framed Net Zero as a multiplier, not a moral gesture. The figures were concrete, the opportunity measured in trillions. Examples such as the \$300 million IFC-backed GreenCell electric bus initiative illustrated a broader point: climate action, when structured well, can deliver cleaner air, jobs, and capital at scale. The message was pragmatic. Sustainability will move forward because it makes economic sense.



INCLUSION

MASS PROSPERITY AND HUMAN POTENTIAL

Manish Sabharwal (Co-founder of TeamLease Services) widened the frame. India's challenge, he argued, is not growth in aggregate, but prosperity at scale. Democracy without economic mobility is incomplete. Productivity, he said, is the missing link, driven by education aligned with employability, urbanisation that works, and entrepreneurship allowed to function.

His point was structural. Progress cannot be measured by GDP alone. It must be judged by whether opportunity reaches millions, not thousands.

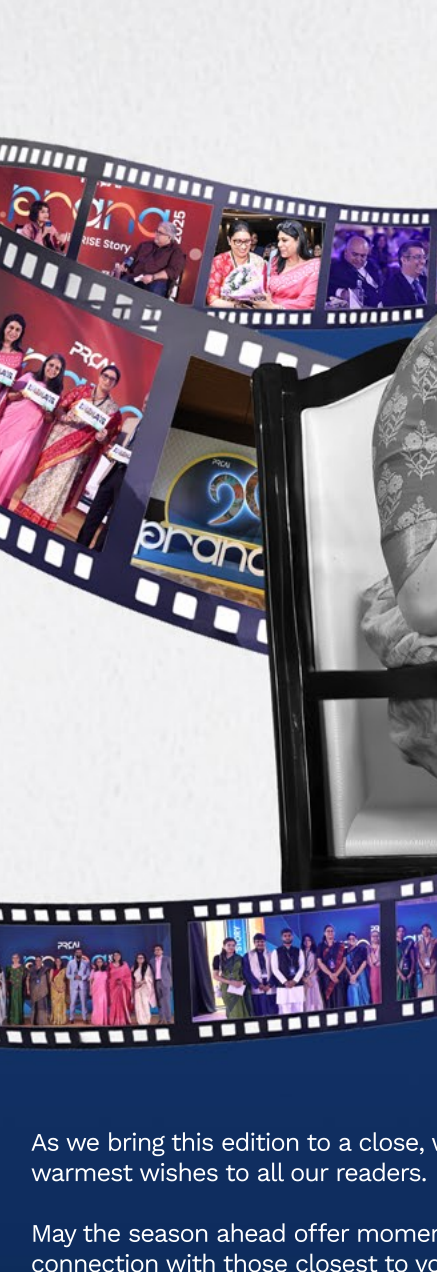


INCLUSION

INCLUSION AS INNOVATION

Chetna Gala Sinha (Founder of Mann Deshi Foundation) brought the conversation back to first principles. Through decades of work with rural women, she demonstrated how financial inclusion, when designed with dignity, becomes a force multiplier. Access to credit is not simply an economic tool. It alters agency, ownership, and community resilience. Her point required no amplification. When women rise, systems change.

The conversation on inclusion extended beyond finance into environmental and civic responsibility. Naina Lal Kidwai (Chairperson, Rothschild India) focused on sustainability, the circular economy, and civic responsibility. The discussion highlighted the need for shared accountability among government, business, and communities, from managing mountaineering waste to improving corporate packaging. "If we can step up to waste the way we did to sanitation, we can solve this too," Kidwai asserted.



REPUTATION

BUILDING REPUTATIONS, NOT JUST ENTERPRISES

Across sectors, the conversation returned to trust.

Aditya Ghosh (Co-founder, Akasa Air) spoke of leadership as a daily discipline, not a communications function. Reputation, he argued, is built through consistency between values and action, especially when conditions are uncertain. In conversation, the shift in public relations was clear: from response to responsibility.

That theme sharpened with Suresh Narayanan's intervention. Having led Nestlé India through a crisis, he described reputation as institutional ballast. Not branding. Not messaging. But the accumulated credibility determines whether an organisation survives scrutiny. Trust, purpose, and heritage, he noted, are tested only when



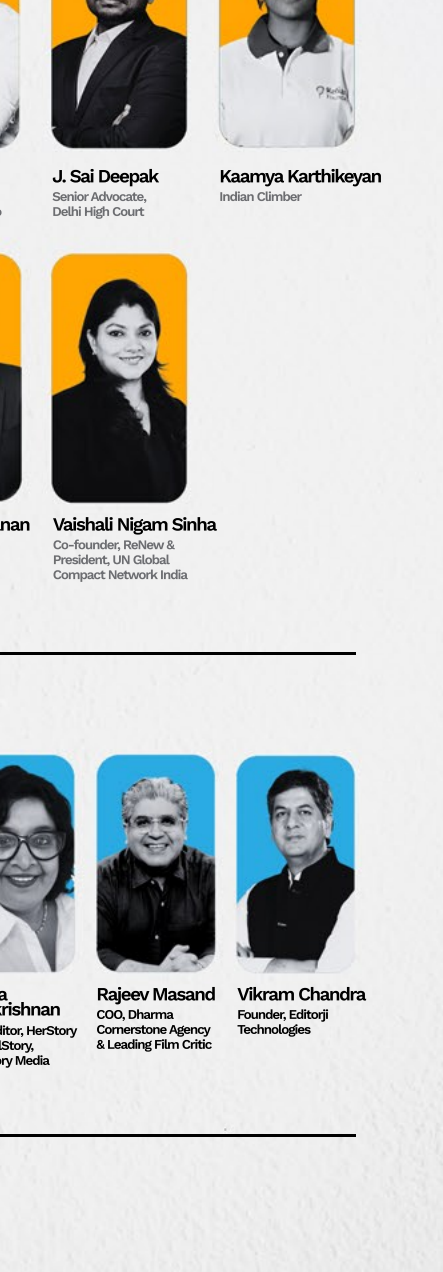
INNOVATION

TECHNOLOGY, TRUST, AND TRANSFORMATION

Technology featured not as spectacle, but as infrastructure.

Suresh Khadakbhavi (CEO, Digi Yatra Foundation) outlined how DigiYatra's privacy-first design repositions trust in the digital age. Users retain control of their data. Consent is built in, not appended. The provocation was deliberate: in an era of surveillance anxiety, trust becomes a competitive advantage.

The argument was clear. Innovation that ignores ethics is brittle. Systems that embed privacy endure.



REPUTATION

CULTURE, IP, AND THE URBAN ECONOMY

The conversation then widened to India's softer forms of capital, those that shape identity, legitimacy, and long-term value. Geographical Indications, from Kanchipuram silks to Basmati rice, were discussed not as nostalgia, but as underutilised economic assets. When protected and positioned with intent, cultural IP can generate livelihoods, tourism, and global recognition. When structured, soft power delivers measurable outcomes.

That same principle applies beyond heritage and into cities. Indore's transformation into India's cleanest city was presented as a case study in civic reputation. Mayor of Indore **Pushyamitra Bhargava** described a strategy rooted not in enforcement alone, but in behavioural change and public ownership. Streets were treated as extensions of citizens' homes, and cleanliness was a shared responsibility. "A city changes when citizens treat streets as extensions of their homes", he said.

The lesson was practical. Urban reputation is built the same way as national reputation: through focus on clear outcomes, citizen participation, financial innovation, and systems that can scale. Indore's journey offered a replicable model for cities seeking credibility through governance, not rhetoric.



India's Icons

Defining The RISE Story

STORYTELLERS



Smt. Smriti Irani
Fmr. Cabinet Minister



Anvita Dutt
Filmmaker, Screenwriter & Director



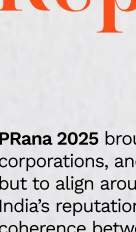
Gaurav Gupta
Creative Director, Gaurav Gupta Studio



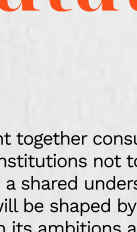
J. Sai Deepak
Senior Advocate, Delhi High Court



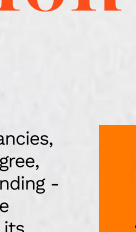
Kaamya Karthikeyan
Indian Climber



Naina Lal Kidwai
Chair, Rothschild & Co India & India Sanitation Coalition



Dr. Sangita Reddy
Joint Managing Director, Apollo Hospitals Enterprise Limited



Suresh Narayanan
Fmr. Chairman & Managing Director, Nestlé India Limited



Vaishali Nigam Sinha
Co-founder, Review & President, UN Global Compact Network India

STORYWEAVERS



Aabha Bakaya
Founder & CEO, Ladies Who Lead



Amish Devgan
Managing Editor, News18 Hindi



Nandini Bhalla
Editor-in-Chief, The World Magazine



Rekha Balakrishnan
Lead Editor, HerStory & SocialStory, YourStory Media



Rajeev Masand
COO, Dhama, Cornerstone Agency & Leading Film Critic



Vikram Chandra
Founder, Editorji Technologies

India's Reputation Capital

PRana 2025 brought together consultancies, corporations, and institutions not to agree, but to align around a shared understanding – India's reputation will be shaped by the coherence between its ambitions and its execution.

The work ahead, speakers acknowledged, is less about articulation and more about follow-through. A reminder that storytelling, at its best, carries humility alongside intent. Serious conversations benefit from perspective. Progress, after all, is sustained not just by conviction, but by humanity.

“The PRana 2026, promises to continue this dialogue, inspire to aspire and contribute to build the story of the nation, and reputation capitalism, marching to the goal of proud Viksit Bharat.”

As we bring this edition to a close, we would like to extend our warmest wishes to all our readers.

May the season ahead offer moments of rest, reflection, and connection with those closest to you. And as we step into the new year, we wish you good health, clarity of purpose, and steady progress in all that you undertake.

We thank our partners for their continued collaboration and contribution to PRana 2025.

Thank you for being part of the PRana and PRCAI community. We look forward to continuing the conversation in the year ahead.

Season's greetings, and best wishes for a happy and meaningful new year.