INDIA'S FRONTLINE IT MAGAZINE
VARINDIA
THE ULTIMATE Voice OF INDIAN VALUE ADDED RESELLERS

VOLUME XXVII ISSUE 05 JANUARY 2026 PRICE RS. 50

datasafeguard
Privacy Management

DPDP Act: Digital Autonomy

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CBO	Founder & CEO	Co-Founder & CGO
Data Safeguard	Data Safeguard	Data Safeguard

From Policy to Practice: Building Trust in India's Digital Future

Digital autonomy is not achieved through compliance alone— it is built through trust, accountability, and responsible governance

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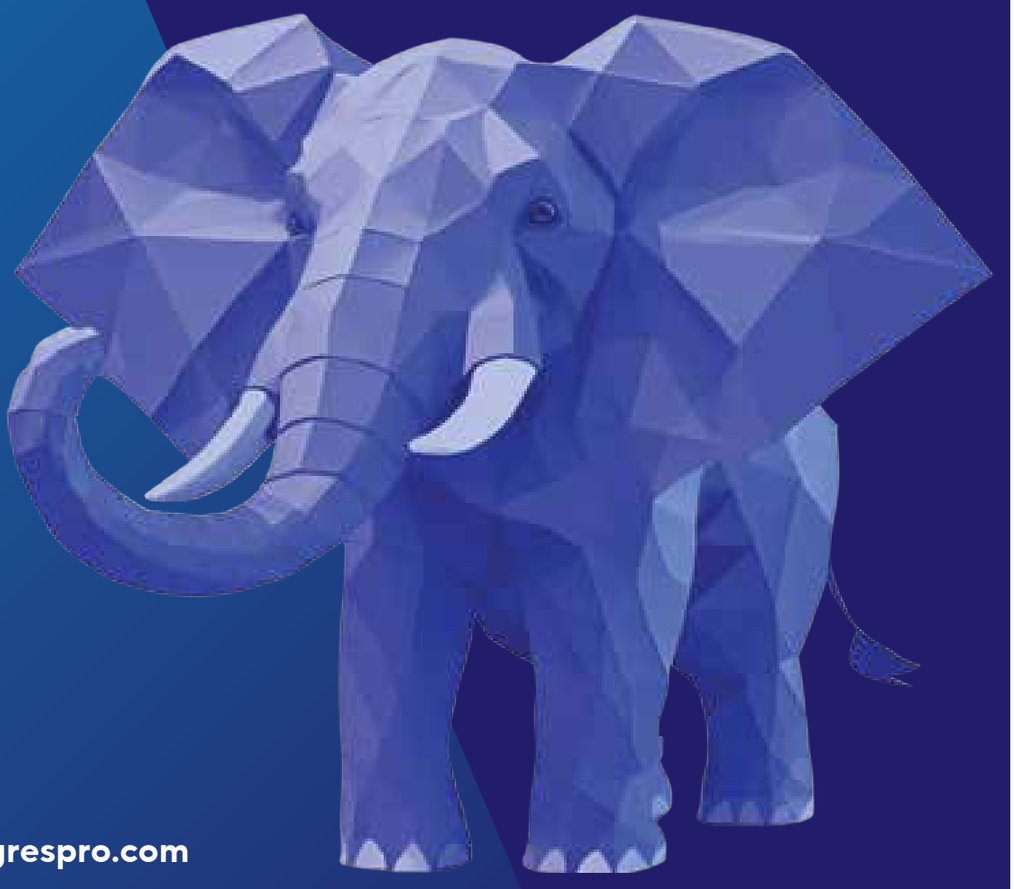

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17TH OITF 2026: DRIVING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS, INSPIRING TRANSFORMATIVE IDEAS

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Tata Communications launches AI-ready suite to empower enterprises

Tata Communications has launched an AI-ready suite of platforms to help enterprises scale artificial intelligence securely and efficiently. Built on its Digital Fabric, the suite includes IZO+ Multi Cloud Network, Edge Distribution Platform, and ThreadSpan, integrating connectivity, cloud, edge and security.

The offerings address challenges such as fragmented infrastructure, rising costs, performance gaps and limited visibility as AI moves from pilots to core operations. The unified platform enables enterprises to simplify complexity, strengthen governance, and deploy AI with greater confidence, control and scalability across distributed environments.

India readies $70 billion push for AI Mission 2.0

India's AI push has entered a decisive execution phase, with Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw confirming $70 billion already committed to AI computing infrastructure and announcing AI Mission 2.0 within six months. Building on AI Mission 1.0, approved in 2024 with a ₹10,371.92 crore outlay, GPU capacity has expanded to 38,000 units, improving access for startups and enterprises. AI Mission 2.0 is expected to attract higher funding and industry participation. With growing AI skilling, sovereign models and renewable-powered infrastructure, India is positioning itself as a global AI hub.

INDIA'S DATA CENTRES ARE BECOMING AI FACTORIES

India's data centre landscape is undergoing a structural shift, driven not by incremental digital growth but by the rapid transition of enterprise AI from pilots to production. What were once passive facilities designed for storage, virtualization, and generic cloud workloads are now being reimagined as active AI execution environments. Capacity alone is no longer sufficient. Architecture, governance, observability, cost predictability, and data sovereignty have become central to data centre strategy.

Over the past year, Indian enterprises across BFSI, telecom, retail, healthcare, manufacturing, and government have moved decisively from AI experimentation to scaled deployment. AI models are now embedded into core business processes—fraud detection, personalization, logistics optimization, citizen services, and compliance monitoring. This shift has exposed a critical gap: traditional data centre and cloud architectures were never designed for continuous, production-grade AI workloads.

The rapid rise of generative AI is fundamentally transforming data centers, as demand for compute power, storage, and ultra-low latency networks reaches unprecedented levels. From text and image generation to video synthesis and real-time audio processing, AI workloads are redefining digital infrastructure requirements.

Secondly, Enterprise AI places fundamentally different demands on infrastructure. It requires sustained GPU-intensive compute, high-throughput storage, real-time telemetry, and lifecycle management spanning training, inference, retraining, and monitoring. Legacy environments optimized for burst workloads, VM consolidation, or storage efficiency struggle to support persistent inference pipelines and frequent model updates. As a result, enterprises are demanding AI-aware infrastructure built by design, not retrofitted later.

This transformation is redefining data centre architecture at every layer. Compute density is increasing sharply with GPUs, AI accelerators, and high-performance CPUs becoming standard. Power and cooling models are being redesigned to support heat-intensive AI clusters, accelerating adoption of liquid cooling, advanced airflow systems, and higher rack power densities. These are no longer premium features but operational necessities.

Network and storage architectures are evolving in parallel. AI workloads generate heavy east–west traffic between compute nodes, storage, and orchestration platforms, requiring low-latency, high-bandwidth fabrics. Storage is shifting from capacity-centric models to throughput- and locality-driven designs, with tiering aligned to AI pipelines. In effect, data centres are being engineered as AI factories rather than server warehouses.

Equally important is the operational shift. AI workloads cannot operate as black boxes, prompting enterprises to demand deep observability across the AI lifecycle—from data ingestion and training to inference accuracy, drift detection, and performance monitoring. Governance is now tightly coupled with infrastructure as expectations around explainability, bias, auditability, and responsible AI grow. With daily AI usage reaching billions of queries in 2025, large-scale training and rapidly expanding inference workloads are placing sustained pressure on data centre capacity and reliability.

Cost control is emerging as a defining challenge. GPU-heavy AI workloads can quickly become unpredictable and expensive on traditional public cloud platforms. Enterprises are therefore pushing for predictable cost models, workload isolation, and granular visibility into AI compute consumption. This is driving convergence between AIOps, FinOps, and infrastructure operations, forcing data centres to offer transparency and financial governance alongside technical performance.

India's regulatory environment is further accelerating change. Data localisation mandates, sectoral regulations, and national digital priorities are fueling the rise of India-hosted and sovereign AI workloads. Enterprises handling sensitive data—particularly in BFSI, healthcare, telecom, and government—are increasingly unwilling to host critical AI systems offshore. Data centres are now evaluated on their ability to support India-resident compute, DPDP Act compliance, and sector-specific regulatory alignment.

By 2026, India's data centres will be evaluated on far more than uptime or physical scale. AI workload readiness, GPU orchestration, built-in observability, compliance, cost transparency, and support for sovereign AI will define competitiveness. Enterprise AI is not just increasing infrastructure demand—it is redefining the very role of the data centre. The winners will be those that treat AI not as another application, but as a new workload paradigm shaping architecture, operations, and trust.

Finally, sustainability remains a key concern, as AI workloads consume vast amounts of power. Operators are exploring cleaner energy sources and efficiency-driven designs as data centers become the backbone of the global AI economy.

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Editor, VARINDIA
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Printed and Published by **Deepak Kumar Sahu** on behalf of M/s. Kalinga Digital Media Pvt. Ltd. and Printed at Pushpak Press Pvt. Ltd. Shed No. 203 - 204, DSIDC Complex, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase-I, New Delhi-110020 and Published at A-84A/3 Rose Apartment, Paryavaran complex, IGNOU Road, New Delhi - 110030, Editor - S Mohini Ratna.

For Subscription queries contact: info@varindia.com
Subscription: Rs. 500(12 issues)Rs. 1000 (24 issues)

All payments favouring:
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Privacy Management

DPDP Act Forum Brings Policy and Practice Together

Data Safeguard recently convened an exclusive, closed-door, invitation-only forum titled "DPDP Act: Digital Autonomy" at the prestigious India International Centre (IIC), New Delhi, bringing together a distinguished gathering of senior government officials, policymakers, regulators, industry leaders, legal experts, and privacy practitioners. The forum served as a high-level platform to deliberate on India's evolving data protection landscape and the nation's journey toward responsible, sovereign, and trust-based digital governance under the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act.

The event commenced with a ceremonial inauguration and traditional lamp-lighting, symbolizing the collective commitment to safeguarding citizens' digital rights. The inauguration was led by Dr. Gulshan Rai, former National Cyber Security Coordinator, Government of India; Shri Vinayak Godse, CEO, Data Security Council of India (DSCI); Dr. Amar Patnaik, former Member of Parliament; and Shri Sudhir Sahu, Founder & CEO, Data Safeguard.

The forum was graced by Shri S. Krishnan, Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India, as the Chief Guest. In his address—also shared through a recorded message—Shri Krishnan described the DPDP Act as a landmark reform that strengthens citizen trust, institutional accountability, and responsible data governance. He emphasized that the legislation is central to India's vision of digital autonomy, balancing the protection of personal data with the need to foster innovation, economic growth, and a resilient digital ecosystem.

Following this, Guest of Honour addresses were delivered by Shri Vinayak Godse, CEO, DSCI, and Dr.Gulshan Rai, former National Cyber Security Coordinator and former Director General of CERT-In. Shri Godse highlighted the importance of industry readiness, cross-sector collaboration, and embedding security-by-design and privacy-by-designprinciples into digital systems to ensure effective compliance. Shri Rai underscored the critical role of trust, accountability, and strong institutional capacity in operationalizing data protection frameworks at scale, stressing that legislation must be supported by robust implementation and enforcement mechanisms.

The Keynote Address by Dr. Amar Patnaik explored the theme "Digital Autonomy: From Compliance Burden to Competitive Catalyst." He articulated how well-designed and effectively implemented data protection regimes can go beyond regulatory compliance to become strategic enablers—strengthening democratic values, enhancing economic competitiveness, and reinforcing India's sovereign digital future in a data-driven global economy.

Setting the broader industry context, Shri Sudhir Sahu, Founder & CEO, Data Safeguard, spoke on the pivotal role of technology, automation, and integrated platforms in translating the DPDP Act from legislative intent into operational reality. He emphasized the need for unified, scalable, and future-ready privacy frameworks that help organizations manage compliance seamlessly while embedding trust, transparency, and accountability into their digital operations.

SHRI S. KRISHNAN
SECRETARY- MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Shri S. Krishnan, Secretary, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India, set the tone by positioning the DPDP Act as a foundational enabler of trust in India's digital ecosystem. He emphasized that data protection is central to citizen confidence, economic growth, and innovation. His address highlighted the importance of balancing individual rights with responsible data use, underscoring that digital autonomy can only be achieved when governance, technology, and institutional accountability move in alignment.

DR. AMAR PATNAIK
FORMER MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, RAJYA SABHA

Dr. Amar Patnaik, former Member of Parliament and public policy thinker, delivered a keynote that reframed the DPDP Act as a shift from compliance burden to competitive catalyst. He spoke about digital autonomy as a democratic and economic imperative, arguing that strong data protection frameworks can strengthen institutional credibility, foster innovation, and support India's long-term sovereign digital ambitions.

DR. GULSHAN RAI
FORMER NATIONAL CYBER SECURITY COORDINATOR

Shri Gulshan Rai, former National Cyber Security Coordinator and former Director General of CERT-In, focused on trust, accountability, and national digital resilience. He reflected on the evolving cyber and data protection landscape, stressing that laws alone are insufficient without strong institutional mechanisms, awareness, and execution. He emphasized that digital trust is a strategic national asset that must be protected through coordinated governance and responsible data stewardship.

VINAYAK GODSE
CEO, DATA SECURITY COUNCIL OF INDIA

Shri Vinayak Godse, CEO of the Data Security Council of India (DSCI), spoke on the industry's readiness and shared responsibility in operationalizing the DPDP Act. He highlighted the need for standardized privacy practices, sectoral collaboration, and continuous capacity building. His remarks reinforced that compliance must evolve into a sustained organizational discipline, supported by security-by-design and privacy-by-design principles.

SUDHIR SAHU
FOUNDER & CEO, DATA SAFEGUARD

Shri Sudhir Sahu, Founder & CEO, Data Safeguard, highlighted the benefits of personal data protection under the DPDP Act, contextualized the benefits for the Indian Citizens and called on the privacy community to create the trust framework. He emphasized on adoption of Unified Privacy Automation framework, Elimination of Redundant Privacy Controls, and responsible use of AI are critical to translating the DPDP Act from policy into practice. His address reinforced that privacy, when operationalized effectively, becomes an enabler of trust, scale, and sustainable digital growth.

THE SECOND HALF OF THE FORUM FEATURED FIVE LEADERSHIP PANEL DISCUSSIONS, ALIGNED WITH KEY IMPLEMENTATION THEMES UNDER THE DPDP ACT:

Privacy Policies	Business Procedures	Staff Awareness	Technology Solutions	Compliance Mapping

Leadership Panel-I
DPDP Act: Human-Centric Privacy

Moderator: Ms. Mahi Gupta, VP of Privacy Strategy, Data Safeguard

Panel Speakers:
Dr. Pavan Duggal, Chief Executive, AI Law Hub
Ms. Padma Jaiswal, IAS, Secretary to Govt of States / UT, Government of National Capital of Region Delhi (GNCTD)
Prof. Major Gen. Dr. Dilawar Singh, Policy Evangelist
Shri Deepak Maheshwari, Senior Policy Advisor, Centre for Social and Economic Progress

Leadership Panel-II
DPDP Act: Business Procedure

Moderator: Mr. Manish Sehgal, Partner, Privacy and Data Protection Services, Deloitte

Panel Speakers:
Mr. Rahul Bhardwaj, VP of Cybersecurity Americas & Global Head Privacy, EXL
Ms. Lagna Panda, Partner, Data Privacy & Competition Law, AP & Partners
Mr. Ram Kohli, General Manager - Risk & Compliance, Wipro Limited
Mr. Chetandeep S. Batra, Sr. Privacy & Security Consultant, EY

Leadership Panel-III
DPDP Act: Staff Awareness

Moderator: Mr. Atul Gupta, Partner, Privacy and Data Protection Services, KPMG India

Panel Speakers:
Mr. Sandip Navdhare, Chief Risk Officer, APAC, National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL)
Ms. Deepti Bhatia, Chair - IAPP New Delhi Chapter, IAPP
Mr. Vishal R Soni, Privacy & Security Leader, HID
Mr. Rahul Bhardwaj, VP of Cybersecurity Americas & Global Head Privacy, EXL

Leadership Panel-IV
DPDP Act: Technology Solution

Moderator: Ms. Himshikha Jain, Privacy Operations Head, EXL

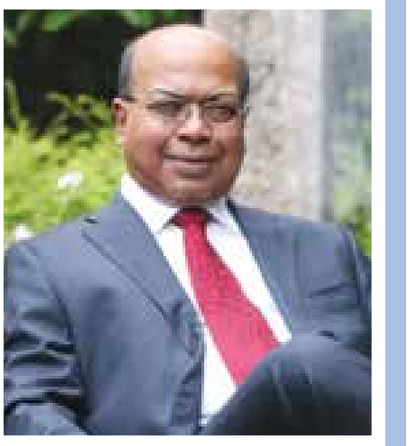
Panel Speakers:
Mr. Gautam Mehta, Vice President - Technology, SAGE Publishing
Mr. Kartikeya Raman, Associate Partner, Grant Thornton Bharat LLP
Mr. Gaurav Khera, Partner, Data Protection & Cybersecurity, Deloitte
Mr. Dhananjay Khanna, SVP & CISO, SBI Card

Leadership Panel-V
DPDP Act: Compliance Mapping

Moderator: Mr. Lalit Kalra, Partner, Cybersecurity & Data Privacy, EY

Panel Speakers:
Mr. Rohit Bharat Das, Partner, Grant Thornton Bharat LLP
Mr. Sunil Sirohi, Chief Information Officer, NIIT Limited
Dr. Jagannath Sahoo, CISO, Gujarat Fluorochemicals Limited
Mr. Naresh Aditya Madhav, DPO, Concentrix

THE WEAPONIZATION OF DIGITAL SPACE: A DOUBLE-EDGED REALITY



DR. ASOKE K. LAHA
Chairman-Emeritus and Founder, InterraIT

I receive hundreds of messages every day across the digital platforms I use—email, WhatsApp, Instagram, and others. To make sense of this constant flow, I tried to broadly categorize them into four groups: critical information relevant to my personal and professional life; unsolicited messages such as product promotions; completely irrelevant communication; and messages deliberately designed to lure users into clicking harmful links or falling into misleading and fraudulent traps.

By and large, messages from friends, fellow professionals, and others known to me are genuine, often limited to inquiries about well-being, greetings on special occasions, or light-hearted exchanges meant to revive old connections, while professional communications usually blend business-related queries with personal interest depending on familiarity. However, unsolicited inquiries and feedback—most of which I consciously ignore, are largely irrelevant, and many appear, from their tone and presentation, originate from fraudsters, online marketers, or similar actors.

When I analyzed how many messages were entirely irrelevant, I was dismayed to discover that they formed the majority, prompting me to reflect on whether this phenomenon could be described as the weaponization of digital tools. Yet this is the darker flip side of digital space, whose positive impact far outweighs its negative effects.

Regulatory systems aim to curb harmful uses while promoting beneficial ones, but the boundary between good and bad often remains blurred, as seen in debates around enhanced security measures such as phone tapping, which may help identify criminals but simultaneously infringe upon the privacy of innocent individuals. Digital technology has effectively neutralized distance—something that earlier generations experienced when letters took days to reach overseas destinations and when international calls, fax machines, or teleprinters were inaccessible luxuries.

While communication is now faster and more efficient, criminal activities using digital tools have multiplied, with individuals routinely receiving unsolicited calls, many of them fraudulent, ranging from fake banking alerts to extreme scams like so-called "digital arrests," where victims are threatened with legal action for crimes they never committed. This menace has grown so pervasive in India that the apex court has intervened, directing agencies to trace and dismantle such operations, yet despite repeated warnings from banks that sensitive information is never sought through unsolicited calls, many people continue to fall prey.

Fraudsters often stay a step ahead of even tech-savvy users, exploiting conveniences such as "tap and pay" technologies, which have led to a rise in contactless scams where cards are discreetly scanned in crowded places, leaving victims unaware until a delayed bank alert reveals the loss. This persistent misuse of digital tools exemplifies their weaponization by unscrupulous elements, despite widespread sharing of cautionary advice across social media.

Artificial intelligence has further expanded the reach of digital technology, raising global concerns about large-scale job displacement, with international bodies such as the United Nations and the World Economic Forum calling for responsible AI deployment even as human replacement accelerates. This, too, can be seen as a form of digital weaponization, forcing us to decide whether humans or machines should take precedence, not by halting technological progress but by subordinating it to human welfare through a carefully calibrated balance.

Happily, there is an increasing awareness of this menace globally, because of the faster pick up of digital technologies. It is permeating into every societal segment, whatever be the economic status of the people. Even in the least developed countries, digital mode is used for transactional purposes. Many countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, where most of the poor people live, digital money is picking up at an increasing pace. Some of these countries have made bitcoins legal. That also instruct us to be more vigilant about the digital fraudsters since empirical evidence indicate that more incidence of scams take place in such regions, where regulatory systems are weak and not easy to enforce.

Therefore, we should strike at a balance in the global pursuit of digitization, especially in a world of more than seven billion people marked by demographic decline in developed nations and unsustainable population growth in developing regions, compounded by strict immigration barriers. The tragic journeys of migrants risking—and often losing—their lives in search of better opportunities underscore this imbalance, even as modern economies continue to rely heavily on migrant labor, from historical examples like enslaved Africans in the U.S. cotton industry to contemporary professionals contributing to the global digital economy.

Growth itself must therefore be redefined, as no nation can thrive in isolation in an interconnected world where globalization and international partnerships remain essential. I sincerely hope that 2026 marks a new awakening—one that resists the weaponization of digital space and instead nurtures a digital environment that strengthens bonds among nations, communities, and people, ensuring that technology ultimately serves humanity rather than undermining it.

That takes me to discuss the ideal role of governments and institutions in addressing the digital menace. Shrieking off responsibility by terming it as the flip side of development is irresponsibility whether it is from the governments, corporations, or multilateral organizations. Discussions at international forums about digital frauds or its negative impact should not be intellectual or at peripheral fringes. They should be anchored in realism. Even now, a lot of people, particularly the older lots even in developed countries are outside the purview of digital economy. They are reluctant to use digital tools for two reasons. First, historically, they are not exposed to such technologies and their mind grooved to currencies for transactions. It is difficult for them to be brought into digital mainstream. Secondly, they are cagey about the traps and subsequent complications of the technology and refuse to use them, fearing that it may empty their hard -earned saving tucked away in safer vaults of the banks.

It may sound bit archaic but still practical that the pace of digitization in monetary realms is bit down and the options are available for transactions to be settled either in physical money or digital denominations. There are instances when the elderly are left with no choice but to settle the transactions digitally only. For such mandatory obligations, there should be options and the concerned departments where such applications must be filed should have both physical and digital options.

In many countries, switching over to digital space is a brownie point. Faster and intense they are construed to be testimonies of development. Instead, such switch overs should be grooved in realism. It should be convenient to people who exercise such options. That also will help mitigate the growing perception that large scale digitization is pushed by technology giants, which have a vested interest in such growth models. We cannot totally discount such arguments. Let us not forget that there is always a golden mean stemming from the concept that technology is always subordinated to human welfare and not otherwise.

India unlocks EU electronics market, eyes $100B export growth by 2035

India has gained preferential access to the EU's $750 billion electronics market under a new Free Trade Agreement, opening significant growth opportunities for domestic manufacturers and exporters. Currently, India–EU electronics trade stands at around $18 billion annually, with estimates suggesting it could rise to $50 billion by 2031 and exceed $100 billion by 2035 as Indian companies expand into high-value components, design, and advanced manufacturing.

The agreement removes duties on key products, including LED TVs, lighting, and home appliances, while nearly 99.6% of Indian electronics exports now qualify for zero-tariff entry. Harmonized standards and mutual recognition will shorten EU qualification timelines, enabling faster market access for Indian goods and boosting competitiveness.

It also supports India's semiconductor ambitions by eliminating 40–44% import duties on critical manufacturing equipment. European firms are expanding production in Noida, Chennai, and Hyderabad, while Indian players like Dixon Technologies strengthen EU-facing operations, positioning India as a reliable global electronics supplier.

India charts path to 3nm chip production, aiming for semiconductor self-reliance

India is ramping up efforts to become a global semiconductor hub, with plans to manufacture advanced 3-nanometre (3nm) chips domestically within the next decade, said Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw. While India has excelled in chip design, the government now aims to develop local fabrication capabilities to produce processors that power smartphones, data centres, AI systems, and high-performance computing.

The initiative is anchored by the second phase of the Design-Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme, focusing on six core semiconductor categories: compute, radio frequency, networking, power, sensors, and memory. By 2029, India aims to meet a significant share of domestic chip demand, with long-term goals targeting 70–75% technological self-reliance by the early 2030s.

The strategy emphasizes collaboration between industry and academia to foster innovation, build indigenous intellectual property, and develop a skilled talent pipeline. This approach positions India as a self-reliant producer and a trusted player in the global semiconductor ecosystem.

Apple Pay poised for India debut by end of 2026

Apple is moving closer to launching Apple Pay in India, indicating a potential change in the country's fast-growing digital payments ecosystem. Widely used across 89 countries, the contactless payment service is expected to debut later this year, subject to regulatory approvals, and will allow iPhone and Apple Watch users to make NFC-based tap-to-pay transactions.

Apple is reportedly working with Indian regulators, banks, and global card networks to finalise approvals. The initial rollout is likely to focus on card-based contactless payments, enabling in-store, in-app, and online transactions. Integration with UPI may follow later, given the added regulatory and operational complexity involved.

Once launched, Apple Pay is expected to intensify competition in India's crowded payments market, currently dominated by UPI platforms and services like Samsung Wallet. Its entry could accelerate NFC adoption, particularly among premium smartphone users, as Apple expands its services footprint in one of the world's largest digital economies.

Dell powers India's largest AI Factory with NxtGen and NVIDIA collaboration

Dell Technologies announced that NxtGen AI will deploy Dell AI Factory with NVIDIA solutions to build India's first and largest dedicated AI factory. The infrastructure, featuring Vertiv liquid-cooled Dell PowerEdge XE9685L servers and fully integrated IR5000 racks, will enable large-scale generative, agentic, and physical AI across enterprises, start-ups, and government programs.

The deployment will host over 4,000 NVIDIA Blackwell GPUs, NVIDIA BlueField-3 DPUs, and NVIDIA Spectrum-X networking, complemented by Dell PowerEdge R670 servers and PowerScale F710 storage. This full-stack platform allows NxtGen to deliver scalable AI services, advancing India's AI adoption while supporting sovereign, secure, and cost-effective infrastructure.

"India's rapid AI growth demands robust, future-ready infrastructure," said Manish Gupta, Dell India MD. NxtGen CEO A.S. Rajgopal added that the AI factory marks a milestone in India's sovereign AI cloud, empowering enterprises to innovate with high-performance, reliable AI capabilities and accelerating the country's AI leadership globally.

Netpoleon partners with AccuKnox to expand Zero Trust cloud security across India and SAARC

Netpoleon India has announced a strategic partnership with AccuKnox India, a global provider of Zero Trust Cloud-Native Application Protection Platforms, to address rising cloud security needs across India and the SAARC region. The collaboration positions Netpoleon as the exclusive Value Added Distributor for AccuKnox, covering markets including India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Maldives and Afghanistan.

Through this alliance, Netpoleon will leverage its extensive network of over 200 resellers and MSSPs to deliver AccuKnox's Code-to-Cognition platform to enterprises and critical infrastructure providers. The solution enables real-time visibility, monitoring and protection across Kubernetes and multi-cloud environments, while supporting compliance-first security aligned with regional regulations.

The joint offering helps organisations meet mandates such as India's DPDP Rules 2025, RBI and SEBI frameworks, alongside global standards including ISO 27001, SOC 2 and PCI-DSS. Both companies reiterated their commitment to a fully channel-driven go-to-market strategy, regionwide adoption.

Tata Group to build AI-focused Innovation City near Navi Mumbai Airport

The Tata Group has announced an investment of over ₹1 lakh crore to develop a world-class, AI-focused Innovation City near the upcoming Navi Mumbai International Airport. Unveiled at the World Economic Forum 2026 in Davos, the project aims to position Maharashtra as a global hub for artificial intelligence, semiconductors, data centres, and advanced digital technologies.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said detailed planning will be completed within six to eight months. The proposed city will house next-generation data centres, research and development facilities, global capability centres, and startup-led innovation ecosystems, while embedding sustainability through a circular economy model covering water, air, and waste management. The announcement aligns with the Raigad–Pen Growth Centre, backed by ₹1 lakh crore in investments. At Davos, MoUs were signed with firms including Brookfield, ArcelorMittal, Skoda, Tata Group, Adani and Reliance, with 83% involving foreign investment from 18 countries, reinforcing Maharashtra's role as an investment hub.

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Cisco unveils 360 Partner Program to boost AI-ready growth and partner profitability

Cisco has launched the Cisco 360 Partner Program, following 15 months of co-design with partners, to strengthen its global ecosystem for the AI-driven era. The revamped program supports diverse partner models—including developers, consultants, MSPs and resellers—helping them deliver outcomes across AI-ready data centres, future workplaces and digital resilience.

The new framework brings greater clarity and predictability to partner earnings through the Cisco Partner Incentive (CPI), while a Partner Locator tool helps customers identify the right expertise across Cisco's security, networking, collaboration, cloud, AI and Splunk portfolios. New partner designations further highlight validated technical and lifecycle capabilities.

Cisco said the program rewards value creation across the customer lifecycle, aligning with growing enterprise demand for AI readiness. Enhanced resources, including Partner Value Indexes, development funds and an improved AI Assistant, are designed to help partners scale, differentiate and drive long-term growth.

Visionet earns elite Microsoft Azure Expert MSP status

Visionet has achieved Microsoft's Azure Expert Managed Services Provider (AEMSP) status after completing a rigorous audit, placing it among fewer than 150 elite partners worldwide. The designation reflects advanced delivery maturity, operational excellence, and proven capability to manage and optimize large-scale Azure environments for enterprises.

With AEMSP recognition, Visionet gains deeper alignment with Microsoft's Azure engineering teams, priority escalation, and faster resolution for mission-critical workloads. The status validates Visionet's sustained investment in Microsoft technologies and strengthens its ability to support complex cloud, data, AI, and modernization initiatives across regulated industries.

Visionet executives said the milestone reinforces customer trust and positions the company to help enterprises modernize responsibly and adopt AI at scale. AEMSP status offers customers Microsoft-backed operating models, stronger governance, reduced execution risk, and faster time-to-value for secure, scalable Azure managed services, supporting long-term growth and resilient cloud operations for global enterprise customers worldwide.

ASUSTOR appoints Supertron Electronics as national distributor in India

ASUSTOR has appointed Supertron Electronics (SEPL VAD) as its national distributor for India, reinforcing its commitment to the country's fast-growing data storage, cloud, and enterprise IT market. The partnership is aimed at accelerating ASUSTOR's expansion across key customer segments.

By leveraging Supertron's pan-India reach, established channel ecosystem, and value-added distribution expertise, ASUSTOR plans to enhance product availability and deepen engagement with enterprise, SMB, and professional customers. The alliance is expected to strengthen ASUSTOR's go-to-market execution while improving pre- and post-sales technical support nationwide.

Executives from both companies said the partnership combines ASUSTOR's innovation in high-performance NAS solutions with Supertron's strong distribution capabilities. The collaboration will focus on channel enablement, faster market access, and secure, scalable data management solutions. Together, ASUSTOR and Supertron aim to address rising demand for reliable storage infrastructure as Indian organisations accelerate digital transformation and data-driven operations.

Zoho launches homegrown ERP solution from rural India to empower growing businesses

Zoho has launched Zoho ERP, a comprehensive, made-in-India enterprise resource planning solution, from its Kumbakonam office in Tamil Nadu. The product aims to help fast-growing Indian businesses scale efficiently without the high costs and rigid structures typical of legacy ERP platforms. Zoho plans to continue hiring local talent to support global rollout and long-term growth.

Zoho ERP addresses challenges faced by Indian businesses transitioning from basic financial systems, offering low-code and no-code capabilities for easier implementation and customization. The platform natively embeds AI-driven insights, automation, voice-based assistance, anomaly detection, and end-to-end visibility across finance and operations, reducing complexity and total cost of ownership.

The ERP integrates core finance, billing, spend, supply chain, payroll, and omnichannel commerce functions while ensuring GST, e-invoicing, and statutory compliance. Industry-specific features support manufacturing, distribution, retail, and non-profits, enabling operational efficiency, robust financial controls, and streamlined compliance tailored to Indian business needs.

Uttar Pradesh to set up 65 data and AI labs, eyes global AI leadership

The Uttar Pradesh government is establishing 65 data and AI labs across the state to position UP as a future leader in the artificial intelligence ecosystem. Two labs are already operational in Lucknow and Gorakhpur, while a third in Pilibhit has been set up through a private partnership. Forty-nine additional labs have been approved, and the process to finalize locations for the remaining 13 is underway.

These labs will serve as innovation hubs for research, experimentation, and deployment of AI and data science solutions. They aim to foster startups, applied research, and skill development in advanced technologies, providing a platform for practical AI applications.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced a ₹2,000 crore allocation for the state's AI Mission over three years, targeting healthcare, agriculture, policing, education, and governance. In partnership with IndiaAI and UPDESCO, the initiative focuses on building digital talent, promoting innovation, and creating employment, positioning Uttar Pradesh as a potential global AI hub.

IBM launches Enterprise Advantage to help firms scale AI platforms faster

IBM has launched IBM Enterprise Advantage, an asset-based consulting service designed to help organisations quickly build, govern and operate customised internal AI platforms at scale. The offering combines IBM's AI tools with consulting expertise, enabling enterprises to redesign workflows, deploy agentic AI applications and scale innovation without changing existing cloud providers, AI models or core infrastructure.

The service supports major platforms including AWS, Google Cloud, Microsoft Azure, IBM watsonx, and both open- and closed-source AI models. It builds on IBM Consulting Advantage, IBM's internal AI-powered delivery platform, which has supported over 150 client engagements and boosted consultant productivity by up to 50%.

With Enterprise Advantage, clients gain access to IBM's proven AI playbook to navigate complex AI ecosystems and drive business value. Early adopters have used the service to identify high-impact use cases, deploy secure AI assistants, and establish scalable, governed foundations for enterprise-wide generative AI adoption.

BenQ unveils MOBIUZ 4th Gen QD-OLED EX271UZ game art monitor

BenQ has announced the launch of the MOBIUZ EX271UZ, its first Game Art Monitor, redefining how gamers experience visual storytelling in modern AAA titles. Built around a 27-inch 4th-Gen QD-OLED panel, the EX271UZ is engineered to preserve creator intent while delivering immersive OLED performance. By combining Smart Game Art intelligence, proprietary color science, and pixel-level contrast control, BenQ introduces a new category of gaming displays - one that treats games as living works of art.

"Gaming in India and South Asia is evolving rapidly—from competitive play to deeply immersive, visually driven experiences," said Rajeev Singh, Managing Director, BenQ India and South Asia. "With MOBIUZ EX271UZ, BenQ is introducing a new way for gamers to experience game art, atmosphere, and storytelling exactly as game creators intended. By combining advanced 4th Gen QD-OLED technology with intelligent color science, we are setting a new benchmark for premium gaming displays in the region."

F5 announces general availability of F5 AI Guardrails and F5 AI Red Team

F5 has announced general availability of F5 AI Guardrails and F5 AI Red Team, two industry-leading solutions that secure mission-critical enterprise AI systems. With these releases, F5 is the only vendor providing a comprehensive end-to-end lifecycle approach to AI runtime security, including enhanced ability to connect and protect AI agents with both out-of-the-box and custom guardrails.

These pioneering security offerings align with customer needs for flexible deployment, model-agnostic protection, and the ability to tailor and adapt AI security policies in real time drawing on F5's deep expertise at the application layer, where AI interactions occur. F5 AI Guardrails and F5 AI Red Team are already deployed at leading Fortune 500 enterprises across multiple industries globally, including in highly regulated financial services and healthcare organizations.

Acronis announces the Acronis Archival Storage

Acronis has announced the launch of Acronis Archival Storage, a long-term, compliant, and cost-efficient data storage and protection solution designed for Managed Service Providers (MSPs) and their small-to-medium business (SMBs) customers. With Acronis Archival Storage, users can retain large amounts of data securely, affordably, and with fast accessibility when it matters most.

Built for today's compliance-driven and data-heavy environments, Acronis Archival Storage enables users to store infrequently accessed data with S3-compatible object storage, integrated directly into Acronis' unified billing and management system. The new solution offers the reliability, durability, and predictable pricing model MSPs need to meet customer demands and long-term retention requirements.

"For many customers, regulations and industry best practices require data to be retained for years," said Gaidar Magdanurov, President at Acronis. "With Acronis Archival Storage, MSPs can now provide their clients with long-term storage built for compliance readiness, cost predictability and ease of use. Native integration with Acronis Cyber Protect Cloud makes using archival storage effortless."

Honeywell unveils AI-enabled technology to personalize In-store shopping with Google Cloud

Honeywell has announced the launch of an AI-enabled retail solution developed in collaboration with Google Cloud and 66degrees that leverages Google's Gemini and Google Cloud's Vertex AI platform to transform the in-store shopping experience for retailers worldwide. The Smart Shopping Platform helps shoppers easily locate desired products, compare similar items and quickly find relevant substitutions when products are unavailable, making in-store shopping more efficient and enjoyable.

"There is nothing more frustrating than roaming through a store unable to find the last item on your grocery list or forgetting the key part needed to complete a home repair," said David Barker, president, Honeywell Productivity Solutions and Services. "The Smart Shopping Platform addresses these pain points, creating a better experience for shoppers. Retailers also benefit from an 'out of the box' AI solution they can implement without having to maintain a team of AI experts."

Commvault announces Cloud Unified Data Vault

Commvault has announced Commvault Cloud Unified Data Vault, a cloud-native service that extends Commvault's trusted, air-gapped protection and resilience capabilities to data written using the S3 protocol, bringing S3-based application and AI data under a unified, policy-driven protection framework for enterprise-grade resilience. By providing a secure, Commvault-managed S3-compatible endpoint, Unified Data Vault allows organizations to apply policy-driven, immutable protection to modern and custom workloads, including emerging AI workloads, without installing agents or building new data management silos.

Many developers use S3 as the default for exporting backups – from databases like CockroachDB and Greenplum to services such as Docusign and monday.com. But these backups often reside in fragmented buckets without consistent retention or lifecycle control, creating hidden compliance risks and recovery delays. Unified Data Vault closes that gap by giving teams a simple path to move S3-compatible backups directly into Commvault-managed, air-gapped storage where data automatically inherits encryption, deduplication, immutability, and policy-based governance.

Acer unveils new premium Swift AI Copilot+ PCs

Acer has introduced its latest Swift AI laptop portfolio, a new generation of Copilot+ PCs on Windows 11 designed to deliver powerful on-device AI capabilities for creators, on-the-go-professionals, and tech-savvy users. The new lineup includes the Swift 16 AI, along with the Swift Edge AI, weighing as light as under 1 kg, and the versatile thin-and-light Swift Go AI in 14- and 16-inch variants.

Each model in the Swift AI series is purpose-built with cutting-edge hardware and complemented with Acer's suite of proprietary AI features. These include productivity enhancements like Acer PurifiedVoice, PurifiedView, and User Sensing, while additional tools for AI-enhanced creativity and entertainment can be downloaded via the Acer Intelligence Space hub. The customizable Acer My Key is a programmable hotkey for launching apps, websites, and Windows 11 features with a single press, providing additional convenience.

Dell revives its XPS laptops at CES 2026 to boost premium PC demand

Dell Technologies has brought back its well-known XPS laptop brand, signalling a strategic rethink as the company looks to strengthen its position in the high-end consumer PC segment. The revival was announced at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) 2026 in Las Vegas, where Dell unveiled the new XPS 14 and XPS 16—its thinnest laptops to date—and confirmed plans to introduce a lighter XPS 13 later this year. The move marks a notable reversal for Dell, which last year retired the XPS branding in favour of a simplified portfolio under "Dell," "Dell Pro," and "Dell Pro Max." Company executives acknowledged that the change did not resonate with customers or partners as intended.

Dell Chief Operating Officer Jeff Clarke admitted the company misjudged the importance of the XPS brand. Launched in the 1990s, XPS played a key role in helping Dell expand beyond its traditional enterprise focus into the consumer market.

Lenovo announces 'rollable' laptop with screen that expands sideways

Lenovo has announced yet another new concept laptop with a transforming screen at CES 2026 - the ThinkPad Rollable XD Concept. It's a ThinkPad that features a flexible OLED display that wraps around to the outer part of its lid. The laptop vertically expands from a 13.3-inch display to a taller 15.9-inch screen — offering more screen real estate for productivity work. It is very similar to Lenovo's already released ThinkBook Plus Gen 6 rollable.

The ThinkPad Rollable XD Concept is Lenovo's bold reimagining of the laptop PC—extending screen real estate, expanding the user experience, and exceeding what was previously thought possible. The concept is one of the world's first out-folding devices with a world-facing display and expanding user-facing screen. The bold design enables multitasking, collaboration, and personalization like never before.

Sophos launches browser-based security platform for hybrid work environments

Sophos has launched Sophos Workspace Protection, a security platform built around a Chromium-based browser that provides application and data controls for hybrid workforces. The platform includes the Sophos Protected Browser, powered by Island, along with zero trust network access, DNS protection and email monitoring capabilities. The solution aims to reduce operational complexity by securing work at the browser level rather than backhauling traffic through centralized infrastructure, according to Sophos.

The Sophos Protected Browser integrates with the Sophos Central platform and provides visibility and control at the workspace level, according to the company. Organizations can protect sensitive data, manage application access and enforce policy directly within the browser. With 85% of the modern workday taking place in a web browser, Sophos developed the solution to address security needs where work happens, the company said.

Zscaler announces new innovations to secure enterprise AI adoption

Zscaler has announced new AI security innovations designed to empower enterprises to secure the fast growing use of AI, while maintaining visibility, control, and governance. As organizations today adopt generative AI and prepare for the use of agentic AI, they face rising risk of cyberattacks and data loss because traditional security models weren't designed to secure AI. The Zscaler AI Security Suite eliminates the trade-off between AI innovation and risk, providing the visibility and controls needed to securely build, deploy, and govern AI at enterprise scale.

Most enterprises lack a complete view of the AI applications and services in use, including GenAI tools, AI development environments, embedded AI in SaaS, models, agents, and underlying infrastructure. This limits their ability to understand AI exposure, data access, and risk. Organizations also struggle to control access and enforce policy as AI traffic shifts to new protocols and non-human patterns that traditional security tools cannot govern.

Nutanix helps customers build and operate distributed sovereign clouds with new capabilities

Nutanix has announced new capabilities in its Nutanix Cloud Platform (NCP) solution designed to give organizations greater flexibility to deploy and govern their infrastructure across distributed environments running traditional, modern, and AI applications, including fully disconnected environments, with cloud providers that offer sovereign services, or across a combination of both – without sacrificing unified management or operational simplicity.

New capabilities in NCP give customers more choice in how they run and govern infrastructure – across their own environments and with cloud providers that offer sovereign services – enabling greater focus on resilience, security and control, and global management. These updates also strengthen the platform's ability to support secure, governed cloud native and AI workloads through new security capabilities in the Nutanix Kubernetes Platform (NKP) and Nutanix Enterprise AI (NAI) solutions.

LG Electronics unveils the Wallpaper TV

At CES 2026, LG Electronics has unveiled its latest OLED lineup, headlined by the return of an icon: the LG OLED evo W6, True Wireless Wallpaper TV. The W6 revives LG's Wallpaper Design, first introduced in 2017, now combined with True Wireless connectivity and the company's most advanced picture innovation yet – Hyper Radiant Color Technology. Celebrating 13 consecutive years of OLED leadership, LG once again sets the standard for next-generation display excellence with its full 2026 OLED evo series, all powered by this groundbreaking technology.

Leading the 2026 lineup is the LG OLED evo W6, envisioned to blend into the space while leaving just the experience. With a nine-millimeter-class thin body, achieved by meticulous miniaturization of essential components and a complete re-engineering of its internal architecture, the Wallpaper TV delivers a sleek, lightweight form without sacrificing structural integrity.

Maharashtra becomes first Indian state to partner with Starlink for satellite internet

Maharashtra has emerged as the first Indian state to formally partner with Elon Musk-owned Starlink, marking a significant step toward expanding satellite-based internet connectivity across remote and underserved regions of the state. The Government of Maharashtra has signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) with Starlink Satellite Communications Pvt Ltd to deploy high-speed satellite broadband for government institutions, rural communities, and critical public infrastructure. Maharashtra, which spans nearly 300,000 square kilometres and includes India's financial capital Mumbai, will serve as Starlink's first state-level government partner in the country.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis described the partnership as a landmark development for the state's digital ambitions. He said the collaboration would help bridge the connectivity gap in aspirational and hard-to-reach districts such as Gadchiroli, Nandurbar, Dharashiv, and Washim, where traditional terrestrial networks have struggled to provide reliable coverage.

Ericsson unveils 5G Advanced location services

Ericsson has announced the launch of its 5G Advanced location services offering, a comprehensive suite of innovations designed to redefine location-based services across commercial 5G Standalone (SA) networks. Set for release in Q1 2026, this breakthrough places Ericsson as the leader in 5G positioning technology, offering a scalable and fully integrated solution on top of Ericsson's dual-mode 5G Core. By embedding positioning as a core 5G SA network capability, Ericsson 5G Advanced location services enables Communications Service Providers (CSPs) to monetize precise location services and expand beyond traditional mobile offerings into verticals such as manufacturing, healthcare, public safety, automotive, drones, and more.

Monica Zethzon, Head of Core Networks, Ericsson, says, "With the launch of 5G Advanced Location Services we are evolving the value of 5G Standalone networks. This innovation gives CSPs the precision and scalability to create differentiated services based on location capabilities."

BSNL and Viasat announce support for Indian Navy's SATCOM modernization program

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) and Viasat have announced they are supporting the next phase of the Indian Navy's satellite communications upgrade program, set to begin later this month. Under an agreement signed between BSNL and the Indian Defense Forces, Viasat's high-capacity Ka-band satellite systems will be used alongside its existing L-band infrastructure to deliver enhanced, resilient, and secure connectivity for Indian naval platforms. Viasat's international government team will support this program under the company's Communication Services segment.

This program will enable the Indian Navy to transition toward a multi-band, multi-constellation SATCOM strategy, leveraging BSNL's Gateway Earth Station and Viasat's global satellite network to provide expanded coverage, higher throughput, and improved reliability for mission-critical operations. As this new phase begins, BSNL and Viasat reaffirm their shared commitment to supporting India's defense and maritime communication modernization.

NETSCOUT ensures optimal customer experiences for 5G network slicing services

NETSCOUT SYSTEMS has announced how its 5G observability solutions give Communications Service Providers (CSPs) end-to-end visibility into 5G Standalone network slices. With 5G slicing supporting always-on high-performance services for immersive gaming, large-scale live sporting events and festivals, and mission-critical applications like remote surgery, it's imperative to have a continuous end-to-end, RAN to Core view to deliver consistently reliable experiences.

Network slicing services are scaling rapidly as 5G Standalone adoption accelerates. Network slicing is a force multiplier that turns 5G into many purpose-built networks on a shared infrastructure to deliver predictable performance. Recent research from GSMA Intelligence indicates that 5G Standalone networks represent a significant strategic shift for mobile operators, with 5.6 billion 5G connections projected by 2030, of which 65% will be 5G Standalone.

Optoma launches WHD221 and WHD211 wireless transmitter and receiver solutions

Optoma has expanded its wireless collaboration portfolio with the launch of the WHD221 and WHD211 Wireless Transmitter and Receiver for wireless collaboration & sharing. Designed to simplify content sharing and enhance productivity, these plug-and-play solutions address the growing need for video conferencing, collaboration, presentation & movie streaming. It connects your device to the audio and video equipment of your choice instantly. Both the WHD221 and WHD211 are engineered for quick and effortless set-up, allowing users to begin presentations and collaborative sessions within seconds. By eliminating the need for software installation, network configuration, or complex cabling, Optoma's wireless solutions enable smooth and uninterrupted meetings across boardrooms, meeting rooms, and collaborative workspaces.

The WHD221 supports wireless content sharing via a USB-C connection, enabling instant screen casting from compatible laptops, tablets and mobile phones with the click of a button.

element14 enhances wireless connectivity offering with Digi International solutions

element14 is now distributing connectivity solutions from Digi International, a leading global provider of Internet of Things (IoT) connectivity products, services, and solutions. The new relationship is an expansion of Avnet's existing relationship with Digi and will enhance element14's wireless communications portfolio. It will also enable Digi to utilise the "power of one," which is the combined strength of element14 and its parent company Avnet across the product lifecycle. With Avnet and element14, customers will be able to find the best solution for their needs around the globe.

Digi International supplies secure embedded technology and connectivity such as system-on-modules, wireless communication systems, and cloud management software to developers in a diverse range of industries, including education, energy, industrial, medical, retail, smart cities and transportation. In every case, it is committed to ensuring that each customer is provided with precisely the right technology for their wireless connectivity requirements.

TAIT hosts knowledge session on CRM opportunities for IT businesses

The Trade Association of Information Technology (TAIT) recently organised a knowledge session titled "Opportunities for TAIT Members in the CRM Market", bringing together IT traders, system integrators, and solution providers for focused learning and networking. The session formed part of TAIT's ongoing efforts to equip members with practical business insights and exposure to emerging technology opportunities that can support sustainable growth in a competitive IT marketplace.

The keynote address was delivered by Limesh Parekh, a recognised expert in CRM and enterprise solutions, who conducted two business-focused sessions. He first explained how CRM platforms improve customer lifecycle management, sales efficiency, service delivery, and data-driven decision-making. In the second session, Parekh outlined how IT traders can build revenue streams through CRM implementation, customisation, support services, and recurring models, particularly when serving SME and MSME customers.

The event was hosted by Hiren Sheth, Director – TAIT, while Rushabh Shah, Director – TAIT, formally welcomed the speaker. Addressing members, TAIT leaders encouraged a shift toward solution-led selling. During the session, TAIT President Magan Gangani announced the TAIT Cricketing Event on 8 February 2026. The evening concluded with mementoes, networking, and partner acknowledgements from members nationwide.

CP PLUS showcases leadership in India's surveillance sector across major industry expos

CP PLUS reaffirmed its leadership in India's surveillance and electronic security sector by emerging as a key highlight across four major industry expos held in January 2026. With a strong presence in Rajkot, Pune, Gandhinagar, and Nagpur, the company showcased its momentum, innovation, and scale, reinforcing a clear message that India's surveillance ecosystem is rapidly evolving with CP PLUS at the forefront through intelligent, indigenised technologies.

At the SSSA Expo in Rajkot and CMDA Pune, CP PLUS demonstrated how surveillance is moving beyond monitoring to intelligent, AI-driven ecosystems. Visitors experienced Made-in-India solutions that enhance situational awareness, enable real-time analytics, and support scalable deployments across enterprises, cities,

and critical infrastructure. The showcases underlined the company's commitment to technological self-reliance and future-ready security.

At the FITAG National Tech Expo in Gandhinagar and Vidyut Expo 2026 in Nagpur, CP PLUS highlighted the role of intelligent surveillance in public safety, urban mobility, and decision-making. Beyond technology displays, the events enabled strategic dialogue with industry leaders and policymakers, reinforcing CP PLUS's thought leadership and its vision of building safer, smarter, and resilient cities as India's security needs continue to expand nationwide.

Ingram Micro honors Prarthana Gupta for leadership in IT channel ecosystem

Cache Digitech CEO Prarthana Gupta was named APAC Female Leader of the Year at the 2025 Ingram Micro ONE Global Innovation Summit in Washington, D.C. She was formally felicitated at the Ingram Micro India Pinnacle Summit 2026 in Mumbai, recognizing her leadership and impact within the IT channel ecosystem. Cache Digitech, a key Ingram Micro partner, continues to strengthen its presence in India by delivering customer-focused solutions and fostering collaboration to drive digital transformation.

Jennifer Anaya, Senior Vice President, Global Marketing, Ingram Micro, said, "Prarthana represents the very best of the APAC partner community. Her leadership, vision, and impact exemplify what the Female Leader of the Year award stands for. We are proud to recognize her achievements globally and celebrate them locally." The award honors women leaders who demonstrate visionary leadership, measurable business impact, and influence across the IT channel, inspiring peers and future leaders across the region.

On the recognition, Prarthana Gupta said, "Being recognized at a global platform like Ingram Micro ONE is an incredible honor. This recognition reinforces my belief in collaboration, inclusion, and innovation in driving sustainable growth." The awards celebrate exceptional channel partners and leaders worldwide, highlighting leadership, advocacy, and innovation that set benchmarks in the global technology ecosystem.

TP-Link hosts strategic US visit for Indian partners, aligns on 2026 global roadmap

TP-Link recently hosted a select group of Indian channel partners along with its senior management team on a strategic visit to the United States, reaffirming its long-term commitment to the Indian market and aligning stakeholders on the company's global roadmap for 2026. The initiative focused on strengthening collaboration and deepening strategic alignment with the channel ecosystem.

The delegation engaged with TP-Link's global leadership at its headquarters in Irvine, California, gaining insights into the company's vision, product roadmap, and innovation priorities across enterprise, SMB, surveillance, AI, and emerging technology segments. Discussions centred on future-ready networking, partner-led growth, and scalable solutions aligned with evolving customer requirements. As part of the visit, partners and the TP-Link India team also attended CES Las Vegas to explore global technology trends and next-generation networking solutions, including enterprise and cloud-managed offerings such as Aireal.

Commenting on the initiative, Sanjay Sehgal, CEO & Managing Director, TP-Link India, said the visit was designed to create deeper strategic alignment by connecting partners directly with global leadership and innovation thinking. Partners described the engagement as valuable, citing increased confidence in TP-Link's long-term vision. The visit also highlighted TP-Link India's growing role within the global organisation and its focus on innovation-led growth.

Hikrobot Offers Bespoke Automotive Solutions to Drive Growth and Productivity

Hikrobot is transforming the automotive sector with its advanced mobile robot solutions, designed to improve logistics efficiency, reduce labour costs, and enhance workplace safety. The systems are applicable to pressing, welding, assembly, and other operations in main engine plants. Integrated with Hikrobot's software platform, these solutions enable seamless production data flow, agile manufacturing, and lean management.

Addressing Key Industry Challenges

Automotive manufacturers face tight production cycles due to the widespread adoption of the Just-In-Time (JIT) method, high manpower requirements, component picking errors from varied suppliers, and safety risks from transporting heavy materials. Traditional transfer methods are labour-intensive and occupy valuable floor space, further limiting efficiency. Hikrobot addresses these challenges by deploying Latent Mobile Robots (LMR) and Forklift Mobile Robots (FMR), automating material transfers and separating workers from components throughout the production process. The system supports multiple operation modes, including production cycles, call buttons, and PDA-based control, reducing manual errors and maximizing JIT efficiency.

Advanced Robotics for Smarter Manufacturing

Hikrobot's LMRs lift and transport up to 1,500kg, navigating tight spaces with 2D code or SLAM navigation, and feature laser obstacle avoidance, alarms, and bumper protection. FMRs handle payloads ranging from 300kg to 3,000kg, using laser SLAM and vision navigation for precise movement, boosting productivity while minimizing labour costs. Conveyor and Heavy-duty Mobile Robots (CMRs) manage heavy-duty transfers, assembly, and welding tasks, offering omni-directional driving, 360° safety protection, and seamless docking with machinery. The RCS 2000 Robot Control System coordinates multi-robot collaboration, optimizes path planning, integrates with ERP/MES systems, and ensures operational safety.

Proven Impact at FAW-Volkswagen

At FAW-Volkswagen's Foshan plant, 47 LMRs were deployed as part of a "Supermarket 2.0" collaborative logistics system integrated with FIS and PLP. The system reduced manual labour intensity by 30%, achieved 100% warehouse outbound accuracy, ensured on-time component supply, and enabled real-time warehouse information exchange. This demonstrates how Hikrobot's robotics and smart logistics solutions enable safer, more efficient, and flexible production environments in the automotive industry.

Hikrobot's integrated approach highlights the potential of intelligent robotics to drive growth, enhance productivity, and support the evolution of modern, smart manufacturing practices.

PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

CADYCE Launches CA-U3HDMI Plus for Flexible 4K Display Connectivity

CADYCE, a well-known provider of computer connectivity and AV solutions, has announced the launch of its latest display adapter, the CA-U3HDMI Plus, addressing the growing need for flexible, high-quality display connectivity across modern work and home environments.

The CA-U3HDMI Plus is a compact USB 3.0 and USB-C to HDMI converter with integrated audio support, allowing users to connect laptops, desktops, and tablets to HDMI-enabled displays at resolutions of up to 4K at 30Hz. Designed for both professional and personal use, the adapter supports extended and mirrored display modes, making it suitable for office presentations, conference rooms, digital signage, and multimedia streaming.

DESIGNED FOR FLEXIBLE AND HIGH-QUALITY DISPLAY CONNECTIVITY

A key highlight of the new adapter is its dual interface support, enabling seamless compatibility with both USB-A and USB-C ports. This eliminates the need for multiple dongles and ensures smooth connectivity across a wide range of devices. The adapter is USB bus-powered, removing the requirement for external power supplies and enabling quick, plug-and-play operation.

"Today's users expect simplicity, clarity, and portability from their connectivity solutions," said a CADYCE spokesperson. "The CA-U3HDMI Plus delivers a reliable, plug-and-play experience that converts standard USB ports into vivid 4K HDMI output with audio."

BUILT FOR MOBILITY AND EVERYDAY PRODUCTIVITY

Engineered with portability in mind, the CA-U3HDMI Plus features a compact and lightweight design, making it ideal for professionals on the move, remote workers, and hot-desking environments. The adapter supports both Windows and macOS, with a driver CD-ROM included to ensure quick and hassle-free installation.

The device is designed to support a wide range of applications, including multi-display workstations, corporate presentations, classrooms, HD media playback, and projector-based setups. By delivering both video and audio through a single HDMI connection, it helps reduce cable clutter while improving overall workspace efficiency.

STRENGTHENING CADYCE'S CONNECTIVITY PORTFOLIO

With the introduction of the CA-U3HDMI Plus, CADYCE continues to strengthen its portfolio of high-performance connectivity solutions that bridge modern computing devices with evolving display technologies.

AVAILABILITY:

The CADYCE CA-U3HDMI Plus is available through authorised CADYCE distributors and channel partners.

Google AI faces UK scrutiny over fair publisher content use

Britain's Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has proposed measures to improve how Google's search services operate, focusing on fairer treatment of publishers whose content appears in AI-generated search summaries. The proposals aim to address concerns over Google's dominance in online search and the growing influence of generative AI on content display and monetisation.

Google said it is exploring updates that would allow websites to opt out of generative AI features in search results, while ensuring changes do not fragment or confuse the user experience.

The tech giant was designated as having "strategic market status" by the CMA in October, allowing proactive regulatory oversight. The proposed remedies mark an early test of these powers, reflecting wider scrutiny of AI-driven platforms that use third-party content without direct publisher compensation. The CMA aims to rebalance the relationship between search platforms and content creators while preserving innovation and choice.

Perplexity signs $750 million deal with Microsoft while maintaining AWS ties

AI startup Perplexity has inked a $750 million, three-year deal with Microsoft to leverage its Azure cloud services, marking an expansion beyond its long-time partner Amazon Web Services (AWS). The partnership allows Perplexity to deploy AI models through Microsoft's Foundry service, including those from OpenAI, Anthropic, and xAI.

Despite the new deal, Perplexity continues to rely on AWS as its preferred cloud provider, with plans to expand that collaboration in the coming weeks. "AWS remains Perplexity's preferred cloud infrastructure provider," the company confirmed, emphasizing it has not shifted spending from Amazon.

Perplexity, a highly valued AI startup, faces intense competition from OpenAI and Google. The company built much of its AI search engine on AWS Bedrock, accessing Anthropic models. CEO Aravind Srinivas has previously expressed full confidence in Amazon's cloud, and AWS continues to highlight Perplexity as a key cutting-edge customer.

Tesla revives Dojo 3 supercomputer with AI5 chip milestone

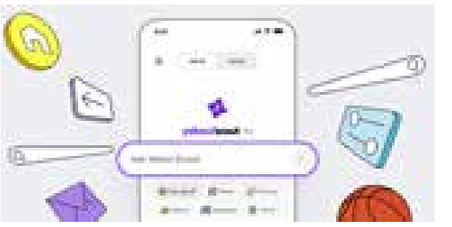
Tesla has restarted its Dojo 3 supercomputer project after Elon Musk confirmed the in-house AI5 chip design is now in "good shape." This milestone allows the company to redirect engineering and capital resources back to the long-paused programme.

Dojo 3 represents Tesla's most ambitious attempt to build a fully self-reliant AI supercomputer powered exclusively by internal hardware. Earlier versions relied partly on third-party accelerators, with Dojo 2 combining Tesla chips and Nvidia GPUs before being discontinued.

The AI5 chip reportedly delivers single-chip performance comparable to Nvidia Hopper processors, while pairing two chips could rival Blackwell-class systems with lower power consumption. Tesla plans a new AI chip roughly every nine months, with AI6 and AI7 in development. The revival signals Tesla's renewed push for proprietary AI hardware, aiming to reduce dependency on external suppliers and accelerate advancements in autonomous driving, robotics, and potentially space-based AI computing.

Yahoo enters AI search race with launch of Yahoo Scout

Yahoo has launched Yahoo Scout, a new AI-powered "answer engine" aimed at delivering direct, contextual responses rather than traditional blue links, marking its entry into the competitive AI search landscape alongside Google, Perplexity, and OpenAI. Currently in beta in the U.S., Scout blends generative AI with Yahoo's content and media expertise, allowing users to ask natural-language questions and receive concise, synthesised answers.



Built on a large knowledge graph covering over a billion entities, Scout assists with everyday tasks such as planning travel, tracking sports and stock movements, comparing products, and verifying news. Yahoo leverages Anthropic's Claude model and Microsoft Bing grounding APIs to ensure accuracy. The platform integrates with Yahoo's shopping and finance services for enhanced utility.

Accessible via Scout.Yahoo.com and the Yahoo Search app on Android and iOS, Yahoo plans to expand personalisation and capabilities, signalling a broader push to regain relevance in AI-driven search.

Micron to invest $24 billion in Singapore memory chip expansion

Micron Technology plans to invest $24 billion over the next decade to build a new semiconductor facility in Singapore, expanding NAND flash memory production amid a global memory chip shortage driven by surging AI demand. The advanced wafer fabrication plant will feature a 700,000-square-foot cleanroom, with output expected in the second half of 2028.

Micron already produces around 98% of its flash memory in Singapore and is developing a $7 billion high-bandwidth memory (HBM) packaging facility, set to supply AI accelerators in 2027. The investment addresses tight global supply, which analysts predict may persist through late 2027 despite capacity expansions by Micron, Samsung, and SK Hynix.

Demand for high-performance storage, especially from North American cloud providers, is rising rapidly, with enterprise SSD prices projected to increase 55–60%. Micron also plans a $1.8 billion acquisition of a Taiwan fab from Powerchip Semiconductor, further boosting DRAM output.

China grants conditional approval for DeepSeek to buy Nvidia H200 chips

Chinese authorities have reportedly granted conditional approval to AI startup DeepSeek to purchase Nvidia's H200 chips, a move that could ease restrictions on advanced U.S. semiconductor imports. The approval, cleared in principle by China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and Ministry of Commerce, is pending final terms from the National Development and Reform Commission.

Earlier, major Chinese tech firms including ByteDance, Alibaba, and Tencent received clearance to buy over 400,000 H200 chips. While approvals signal Beijing's cautious support for high-end chip imports, regulatory conditions may affect shipment timing and volume.

Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang confirmed that formal approval is not yet received. DeepSeek, which gained attention for cost-efficient AI models rivaling U.S. counterparts, plans to launch its next-generation V4 model in February. The approval underscores China's effort to advance domestic AI while navigating geopolitical sensitivities around foreign semiconductor technology.

Cloudflare acquires Human Native to build fair AI data marketplace

Cloudflare has acquired Human Native, an AI data marketplace that connects content creators with AI developers, strengthening its push to build a transparent and sustainable AI-driven internet economy. The deal is aimed at simplifying how developers access high-quality training data, while enabling publishers and creators to surface, price and monetise their content responsibly.

As demand for AI training and inference data accelerates, Cloudflare said content owners increasingly face trade-offs between blocking AI access, optimising for AI systems, or licensing content for fair compensation. Human Native's technology will help Cloudflare develop tools that allow creators to retain control and ownership, while giving AI companies clear, ethical pathways to discover and purchase reliable data.

Founded in 2024 and backed by LocalGlobe and Mercuri, Human Native was created to address unlicensed AI data use. Cloudflare CEO Matthew Prince said the acquisition supports a model where content can be discovered, priced and exchanged transparently, aligning responsible AI growth with creator rights.

Sony hands majority control of Bravia to TCL in strategic move

Sony has announced a major restructuring of its television business, giving TCL a 51% stake in its Bravia TV operations, while retaining 49%. The joint venture is expected to launch in April 2027, pending regulatory approvals, and will continue selling TVs under the Sony and Bravia brands.

The partnership will combine TCL's display manufacturing technology, global scale, and cost efficiencies with Sony's expertise in picture processing, audio engineering, supply chains, and brand development. The collaboration aims to deliver improved products and services while optimising operations.

Sony CEO Kimio Maki said the move will create new customer value in home entertainment, while TCL Chair DU Juan noted it will enhance brand value, scale, and supply-chain efficiency. The deal reflects the pressures of the competitive, low-margin global TV market, where Sony seeks to strengthen Bravia's presence and relevance worldwide.

DigiCert strengthens India data sovereignty with local DigiCert ONE deployment

DigiCert has launched a locally hosted instance of DigiCert ONE in India, strengthening its focus on data sovereignty and regulatory compliance. The move allows Indian organisations to manage digital trust operations entirely within the country, aligning with evolving data residency and governance requirements.

The India-based deployment targets highly regulated sectors such as banking, financial services, insurance, healthcare and telecommunications, which must comply with authorities including RBI, SEBI, IRDAI and CERT-In. DigiCert ONE unifies certificate lifecycle management and digital trust services on a single platform, helping enterprises reduce compliance complexity while improving security, performance and scalability.

India plays a central role in DigiCert's global operations, with nearly three-quarters of its engineering workforce based in Bengaluru and Pune. The launch follows strong growth in the Indian market, where DigiCert has more than doubled its business over the past year and expanded across BFSI, IT services, e-commerce and retail through direct and partner-led models.

Wikipedia marks 25 years as a global hub of free knowledge

Wikipedia is celebrating its 25th anniversary, marking a major milestone in its evolution as the world's largest people-driven encyclopedia dedicated to free and reliable knowledge. To commemorate the occasion, the Wikimedia Foundation has launched the "Wikipedia 25" global campaign, highlighting the platform's history, volunteer community and future direction.

At the heart of Wikipedia are nearly 250,000 volunteer editors worldwide who create, review and fact-check content each month. A new video docuseries showcases contributors from diverse regions, including India, Japan and the US, underscoring the human effort behind trusted knowledge in an increasingly AI-driven internet.

India features prominently in the campaign, with Indian Wikimedian Dr Netha Hussain recognised for her role in sharing accurate COVID-19 information. India ranks fifth globally in Wikipedia page views, generating about 800 million monthly visits. Today, Wikipedia hosts over 65 million articles in 300 languages and remains a foundational resource for the global digital ecosystem.

Meta bets big on AI with Meta Compute infrastructure initiative

Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg has announced the formation of Meta Compute, a new initiative to build tens of gigawatts of computing infrastructure this decade, scaling to hundreds of gigawatts over time. Zuckerberg said the way Meta engineers, invests in, and partners to build this infrastructure will become a long-term strategic advantage.

The move follows Meta's disclosure during its Q2 earnings call last year, where it outlined aggressive spending to support its vision of "personal superintelligence"—AI systems capable of exceeding human cognitive performance. Meta has committed $72 billion to AI infrastructure in fiscal year 2025 alone.

Meta Compute will be led by Santosh Janardhan, head of global infrastructure and co-head of engineering, alongside Daniel Gross. Dina Powell McCormick has joined Meta as president and vice chair. The push comes as Meta looks to regain momentum in the AI race following the muted response to its Llama 4 model.

Nvidia–OpenAI $100 billion AI funding talks hit roadblock

Nvidia's discussions to invest up to $100 billion in OpenAI have stalled, highlighting potential friction between two of the most influential players in the artificial intelligence industry. The talks reportedly broke down after internal concerns were raised within Nvidia, despite both companies announcing a letter of intent for a strategic partnership in September.

The proposed investment was aimed at funding large-scale AI infrastructure, including new data centres powered by Nvidia hardware, with a planned capacity of nearly 10 gigawatts—comparable to New York City's peak electricity demand. OpenAI, creator of ChatGPT, is seeking massive capital to support its next phase of growth, while Nvidia remains the dominant supplier of AI processors.

Nvidia said it remains OpenAI's preferred partner and expects continued collaboration, without addressing the deal's status. OpenAI is reportedly still pursuing the $100 billion funding round, with Amazon in talks to invest up to $50 billion.

17th OITF 2026:

DRIVING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS, INSPIRING TRANSFORMATIVE IDEAS

The 17th edition of the Odisha Information Technology Fair (OITF) concluded on a high note, drawing a diverse cross-section of industry participants. Marking the seventeenth year, the IT event that takes place in Bhubaneswar annually is deeply acknowledged by the industry for setting the benchmark on holding cutting-edge discussions on technology trends and innovations.

Aligning with its tradition of fostering key partnerships and inspiring transformative ideas, this year's event successfully blended the latest in tech developments with an engaging atmosphere while keeping the attendees informed and giving the opportunity for networking.

The theme of this years' event was "Driving Growth with Innovation & Transparency" and was dedicated to the CIOs and VARS of the Indian ICT Industry. The event was supported by OCAC, ESC, FAIITA and ITAO who have extended their support to the event.

The event kick-started with the auspicious lamp lighting ceremony, and was graced by the presence of honourable guests like Prof. Arun Kumar Rath, Chairman, Centre of Corporate Governance & CSR IIM Nagpur; Prof. Debi Prasanna Pattanayak, Chancellor- Centurion University; Dr. Arindam Sarkar, Head of the Dept. of C.S. & E - Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandira, Belur Math, Kolkata & Chief Architect - FaceOff Technologies Inc.; Achimuthu Pandiarajan, System Engineer – Commscope; Rabi Narayan Behera, Member of Parliament, Govt. Of India; Dr. Deepak Kumar Sahu, Publisher, VARINDIA and S Mohini Ratna, Editor – VARINDIA.

Dr. Deepak Kumar Sahu, Publisher, VARINDIA presented the welcome address in which underlined how Bhubaneswar has become a hotbed for emerging technologies and has the opportunity to become a global technology back office and a future R&D hub for multinational companies. "Odisha has witnessed strong growth in IT exports, with around 93 companies now exporting software and electronics, up from just 17 in 2023. The startup ecosystem is also gaining momentum. Of the nearly 3,000 startups registered in the state, about 5% are already on a profitable and growth-oriented trajectory, highlighting the maturing innovation landscape."

The event then featured insightful presentations, starting with Prof. Arun Kumar Rath, Chairman, Centre of Corporate Governance & CSR IIM Nagpur, who shared his invaluable perspectives before the audience, drawn from his distinguished service and academic leadership.

Prof. Debi Prasanna Pattanayak, Chancellor- Centurion University presented his inspiring insights and thanked VARINDIA for recognizing and felicitating the iconic personalities of Odisha in the Jewels of Odisha coffee table book.

Dr. Arindam Sarkar, Head of the Dept. of C.S. & E - Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandira, Belur Math, Kolkata & Chief Architect - FaceOff Technologies addressed the audience on the topic – 'Privacy- First Quantum Safe AI for Trusted Digital Growth', giving everyone a glimpse of how the FaceOff technology works.

Achimuthu Pandiarajan, System Engineer – Commscope gave his presentation and shared his valuable expertise on digital infrastructure and connectivity, which added strong technical depth and relevance to the event.

In his keynote address, Rabi Narayan Behera, Member of Parliament, Govt. of India presented his visionary insights, highlighting the government's unwavering commitment to inclusive development and nation-building.

OITF 2026 witnessed the launch of the Fourth edition of Jewels of Odisha, a prestigious coffee-table book celebrating eminent personalities who have brought pride to the state and made significant contributions to shaping modern India. This year's book featured leaders and innovators from various industries, and celebrated their significant contributions in their respective sectors, thus showcasing Odisha's growing influence on India's development.

THE EVENT ALSO TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO FELICITATE A FEW OF THE PERSONALITIES WHO WERE PRESENT DURING THE EVENT.

The event concluded with a prestigious awards ceremony honoring the winners of the 16th VARINDIA IT Cup 2026 held in Bhubaneswar. Beyond sports, the tournament celebrates teamwork, resilience, and community spirit, creating a collaborative platform that blends competition with camaraderie to build lasting relationships and unlock hidden potential.

This time 12 Corporates participated in the tournament - Innovare Cloud, Esquire, CSM Technologies, Startek, Curebay, Wipro, Nisum Technologies, E & IT Dept., Govt. of Odisha, Polosoft, Incture, TCS and ESSPL.

OITF 2026 announced the winners of the IT Cup. The Man of the Series trophy was awarded to Abhishek Sahu of Innovare Cloud. While the winner of the 16th VARINDIA IT Cup 2026 was TCS, Innovare Cloud was named the Runners up team of the tournament.

The 17th OITF proved to be a resounding success, both in the quality of its content and in celebrating the state's contributions. Moving forward, VARINDIA remains committed to sustaining this legacy by providing a platform where industry professionals can stay abreast of emerging trends, exchange insights, and connect with peers.

Reviving Odisha's ancient knowledge through technology is key to India's future

DR. RABINDRA NARAYAN BEHERA
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, GOVT. OF INDIA

"Odisha stands as one of India's most profound civilisational and knowledge centres, and the revival of its ancient wisdom through modern technology is vital to shaping the nation's future. Initiatives such as the Jewels of Odisha coffee table book play an important role in identifying, recognising, and celebrating individuals who reflect the state's intellectual, cultural, and global contributions. Odisha has historically been a land of learning, spirituality, and international engagement, particularly through its central role in the spread of Buddhism and its strong maritime traditions. Long before the advent of computers, satellites, or digital tools, our ancestors demonstrated advanced scientific understanding, navigational expertise, and philosophical depth, enabling cultural exchange across Asia and establishing Odisha's global relevance.

Over the years, however, colonial-era education systems weakened India's indigenous knowledge frameworks by eroding traditional learning, cultural confidence, and intellectual self-reliance. Despite being among the most literate societies historically, India witnessed a significant decline in knowledge continuity during this period. Yet, vast repositories of wisdom still exist in palm-leaf manuscripts, temple architecture, Buddhist texts, language systems, and ancient scientific practices. While efforts are underway to digitise these resources, digitisation alone is not sufficient. What is urgently required is deeper research, contextual interpretation, and meaningful global dissemination, especially at a time when artificial intelligence and data-driven technologies are reshaping how knowledge is preserved, accessed, and applied.

As India progresses towards long-term national and state development milestones such as Vikshit Bharat by 2047 and Vikshit Odisha by 2036, the responsibility of this transformation rests largely with the digitally native younger generation. Odisha's future opportunities in areas such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, semiconductors, quantum computing, inland waterways, maritime trade, and the blue economy are natural extensions of its historical strengths. The state's evolution from early digital governance challenges to becoming a potential hub for advanced technologies reflects its readiness for the next phase of growth. By integrating ancient wisdom with contemporary innovation, Odisha can re-emerge as a leading knowledge and technology hub for eastern India and beyond, restoring pride, purpose, and global recognition to its enduring civilisational legacy. This collective effort demands collaboration among government, academia, industry, and society to ensure heritage-driven innovation delivers inclusive growth, strategic autonomy, and sustained global leadership for future generations' worldwide impact."

Odisha has enormous potential to become a global tech and R&D hub

DR. DEEPAK KUMAR SAHU
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, VARINDIA

"Bhubaneswar has emerged as a hotbed for emerging technologies and holds strong potential to evolve into a global technology back office and a future R&D hub for multinational companies. This outlook is supported by recent trends. Odisha has witnessed strong growth in IT exports, with nearly 93 companies now exporting software and electronics, compared to just 17 in 2023. The startup ecosystem is also gaining momentum. Of the nearly 3,000 startups registered in the state, around five percent are already on a profitable and growth-oriented trajectory, highlighting a maturing innovation landscape. These indicators suggest that Odisha is well positioned to emerge as a key growth destination in India's digital economy.

This is the right time for the state to introduce a progressive and GCC-friendly policy framework. With coordinated efforts from the government, policymakers, industry bodies, and the media, Odisha can position itself as a preferred destination for global companies to establish and scale operations. One important recommendation is the creation of a full-stack Sovereign Artificial Intelligence Park, supported by state-led investments in AI infrastructure. Such an initiative can attract enterprises to set up AI labs and innovation centres in the state. With global AI spending projected to cross USD 512 billion by 2027 and 76 percent of Indian enterprises already piloting or planning GenAI investments, AI has become the primary catalyst for innovation and competitiveness. Future digital businesses will be inherently AI-driven, reshaping technology investment priorities across sectors.

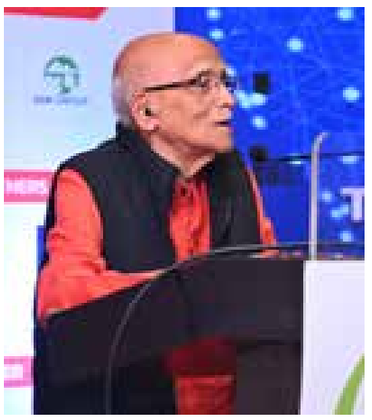
At the same time, AI is transforming the threat landscape around digital identity, security, and trust. As cyberattacks become more sophisticated, stolen credentials, outdated authentication, and AI-driven phishing have emerged as major vulnerabilities. Fraud has evolved beyond fake identities into synthetic businesses created using AI and forged data. By 2026, identity security will reach a tipping point as AI-powered emails, calls, and messages closely mimic human intent, making passwords and OTPs increasingly ineffective. In parallel, commerce is shifting towards an agentic model where autonomous AI agents plan, negotiate, and transact on users' behalf, unlocking significant economic opportunity. Through platforms such as VARINDIA, Jewels of Odisha, and research-driven initiatives like FaceOff, the focus remains on strengthening digital trust, combating deepfakes, and promoting responsible AI adoption as AI, GenAI, and quantum technologies increasingly move from assisting human decisions to executing them."

Innovation has become critical for the growth of the Indian economy today

PROF. ARUN KUMAR RATH
CHAIRMAN, CENTRE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE & CSR IIM NAGPUR

"With the 17th OITF, VARINDIA has gone beyond the conventional boundaries of social responsibility and industry discourse by honoring the 50 Jewels of India. This initiative is a matter of pride, as it reflects the team's willingness to step beyond its core domain into a space few choose to explore. Looking ahead, two milestone years stand before us—2036, marking 100 years of Odisha as a separate state, and 2047, when Bharat will celebrate a century of independence. These moments compel us to reflect on what we have achieved over the past hundred years—achievements that would make our forefathers proud—and to ask what meaningful contributions we will make as responsible citizens of the nation. If we find ourselves lacking answers, now is the time to introspect, realign, and act with purpose, evaluating where we stand and the direction we are heading.

Equally important is innovation, which lies at the heart of growth. Without innovation, progress stagnates. History reminds us that the Industrial Revolution of the 18th century transformed societies and economies, enabling nations to prosper—and innovation was the driving force behind that transformation. Today, we must once again ask ourselves whether we are innovating enough to sustain growth. Innovation fuels new engineering capabilities, entrepreneurial spirit, and ultimately, the overall development of the nation."



It is important to reflect the true purpose of growth when India becomes the 3rd largest economy

PROF. DEBI PRASANNA PATTANAYAK
CHANCELLOR- CENTURION UNIVERSITY

"I extend my congratulations to VARINDIA for successfully carrying forward this initiative for the past 17 years. Equally commendable is their vision and commitment to recognizing and honoring individuals from Odisha who have made significant contributions to nation-building. These individuals stand at the core of progress, and I applaud each of them for their valuable contributions to the state.

Odisha is exceptionally rich in culture, traditions, music, and art. However, from an economic standpoint, the state still faces challenges. While India aspires to become the world's third-largest economy in the next three to four years, it is important to reflect on the true purpose of this growth if a majority of the wealth remains concentrated among a small segment of the population. The greater challenge before us is to ensure that economic growth is inclusive—so that prosperity reaches not just the nation as a whole, but every citizen.

For a state like Odisha to truly prosper, the development of skilled talent and innovation is essential. Equally critical is access to financial resources to fuel this innovation. Transforming ideas into reality requires adequate funding and economic support, and in the long run, this will validate the priorities and choices we make today."

Digital transformation has become the backbone of business growth

ACHIMUTHU PANDIARAJAN
SYSTEM ENGINEER – COMMSCOPE

"Digital transformation has become the backbone of business growth. With the increase in the number of users, and the number of applications, the network is no longer a support function. The network is playing an increasingly important role as data is being secured and centralized and IT & facilities are being converged. Wired and wireless options are also growing. The network therefore is becoming a business enabler. With more than 40+ years of experience in the area of manufacturing networking infrastructure solutions, CommScope is pushing the boundaries of technology to create the world's most advanced wired and wireless networks. Our global team of employees, innovators and technologists empower customers to anticipate what's next and invent what's possible. As businesses adopt cloud, AI-driven operations, IoT ecosystems, and high-speed network solutions, the demand for secure, scalable, and resilient digital infrastructure is accelerating. CommScope is helping organizations modernize networks, enhance performance, and build future-ready digital environments. In India, CommScope has its manufacturing facility in Goa, aligning itself with the idea of Make in India.

In terms of deploying our solutions, CommScope provided the critical infrastructure copper and fibre cabling for India's new Parliament building in New Delhi. This contribution is part of the high-tech, modern connectivity solutions installed to ensure secure and efficient communication within the new legislative complex. We have also delivered solutions for large data centers here in India. CommScope's high-performance fiber and copper cabling solutions are also commonly utilized in advanced, mission-critical, secure data center infrastructures like the Odisha State Data Centre."

FACEOFF leads the way in privacy-first quantum-safe AI for trusted digital growth

DR. ARINDAM SARKAR
CHIEF ARCHITECT, FACEOFF TECHNOLOGIES INC.

"At FACEOFF Technologies, we are committed to pioneering privacy-first, quantum-safe AI for trusted digital growth. As enterprises across sectors—education, healthcare, finance, and technology—eagerly adopt AI, studies show that 95% of AI initiatives fail to deliver intended results. This highlights the crucial challenge of designing AI algorithms that are not only intelligent but secure, compliant, and ethical from inception. FACEOFF was built with this principle at its core. Our platform collects only the data essential for digital identity authentication, stress analysis, fraud detection, and behavioral evaluation, including facial expressions, eye movement, posture, heart rate, and oxygen saturation—all while maintaining compliance with global regulations such as the DPDP Act and GDPR.

Our solutions integrate multiple innovations, including the Adaptive Cognitive Engine, which dynamically selects encryption algorithms based on device resources and threat scenarios, providing quantum-safe protection in anticipation of the next generation of computing. FACEOFF offers advanced authentication methods, from passwordless access using face and behavioral biometrics to trusted QR codes, document verification systems, and deepfake detection, all powered by multimodal AI analyzing facial cues, voice patterns, and physiological signals. Our AI is fully explainable and adaptive, delivering repeatable and transparent results while continuously self-correcting. Humans remain central to the loop, verifying and cross-checking decisions, ensuring robust detection of fraud, secure identity verification, and reliable decision-making across all applications.

Additionally, FACEOFF emphasizes privacy-preserving frameworks, including federated learning and attribute-based data sharing, securing personal information on users' devices while enabling actionable AI insights. By combining quantum-safe encryption, explainable AI, adaptive learning, and privacy-first design, our technologies allow organizations to confidently deploy AI, prevent misuse of sensitive data, and comply with evolving regulatory requirements. Across financial services, healthcare, education, and beyond, FACEOFF empowers enterprises to manage digital identities, detect fraud, and safeguard critical information. In essence, we are creating a new paradigm where innovation, trust, security, and privacy converge, enabling enterprises to achieve meaningful digital growth while protecting individual data in an AI-first, quantum-ready world—a world where privacy and trust are not optional, but foundational."

PRODUCT DISPLAY AND DELEGATES AT THE EVENT

16th VARINDIA IT-CUP

Among IT/ITES Sectors....

A TENNIS BALL CRICKET TOURNAMENT

3rd, 4th, 10th & 11th JANUARY, 2026, BHUBANESWAR
Venue: CSIR-IMMT Ground, Archarjya Vihar Square, Bhubaneswar

16TH VARINDIA IT CUP CRICKET TOURNAMENT 2026

ALIGNING CORPORATE VISION WITH ATHLETIC EXCELLENCE

The 16th edition of the VARINDIA IT Cup Cricket Tournament 2026 once again reaffirmed its position as a flagship corporate sporting event that goes far beyond the boundaries of the cricket field. More than just a competition, the tournament served as a powerful platform for fostering camaraderie, collaboration, and community engagement within India's corporate IT ecosystem.

Designed as a Corporate Cricket League, the VARINDIA IT Cup offered professionals an opportunity to step away from their daily work routines and showcase their sporting talent. Held over multiple weekends, the tournament provided a refreshing break from the corporate grind, enabling participants to unwind, recharge, and build stronger interpersonal bonds. The spirit of healthy competition on the field translated into meaningful networking and teamwork off it, reinforcing shared values that extend well into the workplace.

The 2026 edition witnessed enthusiastic participation from 12 leading enterprises, including CSM Technologies, CureBay, E Square System & Technologies, ESSPL, Incture, Inovaare Cloud, Nisum Technologies, Polosoft, Startek, TCS, and Wipro. The event also received strong institutional support from the Odisha Computer Application Centre (OCAC) and the IT Department, underscoring the growing recognition of sports as a vital contributor to employee engagement and workplace morale.

Matches were held on January 3rd, 4th, 10th, and 11th, culminating in high-energy semi-finals between Wipro vs Inovaare Cloud and TCS vs ESSPL on January 11th. The tournament concluded with a thrilling finale that showcased skill, strategy, and teamwork at its best. Team Inovaare Cloud emerged as the Champions, displaying consistent dominance throughout the tournament, while TCS secured the Runner-Up position after a commendable performance.

WINNERS OF 14TH VARINDIA IT CUP 2026 - TCS

Individual excellence was equally celebrated, with Mr. Abhishek Sahoo of Inovaare Cloud being named Man of the Seriesfor his outstanding all-round contribution, which played a pivotal role in his team's success.

At its core, the VARINDIA IT Cup Cricket Tournament exemplifies the true spirit of sportsmanship in the corporate world. It highlights how sports can bridge organizational boundaries, nurture discipline and mutual respect, and create a vibrant, connected professional community. As VARINDIA looks ahead to future editions, the tournament continues to stand as a testament to the power of sport in strengthening collaboration, wellness, and unity across the IT industry.

14TH VARINDIA IT CUP 2026 - MAN OF THE SERIES - MR. ABHISHEK SAHU, INNOVARE CLOUD

14TH VARINDIA IT CUP 2026 - TOURNAMENT UMPIRE - MR. SUSHANT DASH, OCA

14TH VARINDIA IT CUP 2026 -RUNNER UP TEAM - INNOVARE CLOUD

The Honored Jewels of Odisha 2026

1 ANIL PRADHAN

2 ANVI AGRAWAL

3 AYUSHMAN NANDA

4 CHARUDUTTA PANIGRAHI

5 DASH BENHUR

6 DEEPAK KUMAR KARAN

7 DR. PADMINI PANIGRAHI

8 DR. DIPAK SAMANTARAI

9 DR. NATABAR ROUT

10 DR. VIJAYA LAKSHMI MOHANTY

11 GOPINATH SINGH

12 DR. JAYASHREE DHALA

13 KAMALAKANTA JENA

14 LAXMIDHAR ROUT

15 MAJ GEN RAMA KRUSHNA SAHOO (RETD.)

16 MINATI MOHAPATRA

17 NARASINGHA PRASAD GURU

18 OMPRAKASH MISHRA

19 PRADEEP KUMAR JENA

20 PRAKRUTI MISHRA

21 PRATIBHA SATPATHY

22 PROF ADITYA PRASAD DASH

23 SAKYASINGHA MAHAPATRA

24 SARBESWAR BHOI

25 SATYABRATA ROUT

Jewels of Odisha 2026:

Celebrating Excellence and Heritage at Bhubaneswar

The glittering ballroom of Mayfair Lagoon witnessed a momentous celebration of Odia excellence as Kalinga Digital Media and VARINDIA hosted the prestigious Jewels of Odisha 2026 awards ceremony. The event, held as part of the 17th Odisha Information and Technology Fair (OITF), honored fifty distinguished personalities whose extraordinary contributions across diverse fields have brought immense pride to the state.

Hon'ble Shri Rabi Narayan Behera, Member of Parliament, graced the occasion as Chief Guest, lending dignity and significance to an evening that celebrated not just individual achievement but Odisha's collective spirit of innovation, resilience, and cultural richness.

HONORING EXCELLENCE ACROSS DOMAINS

The centerpiece of the evening was the felicitation of fifty luminaries spanning an impressive spectrum of excellence—from scientists and educators to artists and social reformers, from pioneering entrepreneurs to sports champions. Among the distinguished honorees were Dr. Kailash Chandra Sahu, the NASA scientist who became the first to measure an isolated black hole; Debashis Das, Odisha's first Chess Grandmaster; environmental crusader Gopinath Singh, who transformed 160 hectares of barren land into thriving forest; and business visionary Surendra Nath Panda, who built Bharat Masala into a Rs. 1,000-crore empire from a humble Rs. 1,000 investment.

The gathering also celebrated youth excellence, with six-year-old prodigies Anvi Agrawal (Creative Arts) and fourteen- year- old Ayushman Nanda (Technology Innovation) proving that age is no barrier to greatness. Padma Shri awardees including Dr. Damayanti Beshra (Cultural Preservation), Dr. Ashok Kumar Mahapatra (Healthcare Excellence), Durga Charan Ranbir (Classical Dance), and Pratibha Satpathy (Literary Excellence) added gravitas to an already stellar lineup.

Women achievers shone brilliantly, with fifteen exceptional personalities—including Manasi Pradhan (Women's Rights), Minati Mohapatra (Sports Pioneering), Sujata Mohapatra (Classical Dance), and Dr. Padmini Panigrahi (Social Entrepreneurship)—demonstrating that Odia women are breaking barriers across every domain.

FACE OF ODISHA 2026: DHARMENDRA PRADHAN

The evening's most anticipated moment arrived with the conferment of the "Face of Odisha 2026" special recognition upon Hon'ble Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Minister of Education and Member of Parliament from Sambalpur. The award honored his transformative leadership—from the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana that liberated 80 million households to his current stewardship of the National Education Policy 2020—embodying how a son of Odisha can carry the state's values to the nation's highest forums while creating lasting impact.

CULTURAL HERITAGE CELEBRATED

True to its mission of honoring both innovation and tradition, Jewels of Odisha 2026 dedicated significant space to celebrating ten vibrant folk dance forms of Odisha—including Ghumura, Kela Keluni, and Jodi Sankha—ensuring that as the state strides into a technology-driven future, its cultural soul remains alive and celebrated. Cultural performances during the evening brought these traditions to life, mesmerizing the audience with rhythmic movements that have connected generations for centuries.

A COFFEE TABLE BOOK FOR POSTERITY

The official launch of the 4th edition of the Jewels of Odisha 2026 coffee table book marked another highlight of the evening. This beautifully curated publication profiles all fifty honorees alongside the ten folk dance forms, preserving their journeys for future generations. The book serves not merely as documentation but as inspiration—showing young Odias across villages and cities that excellence emerges from dedication, not privilege.

THE OITF CONNECTION

As part of the 17th Odisha Information and Technology Fair, Jewels of Odisha 2026 perfectly complemented the broader theme of celebrating Odisha's transformation into a technology and innovation hub. The gathering of IT leaders, entrepreneurs, policymakers, and achievers created a unique confluence where technological progress met cultural heritage, where global ambitions honored local roots.

A VISION FULFILLED

Speaking at the event, Dr. Deepak Kumar Sahu, Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of Kalinga Digital Media emphasized that Jewels of Odisha represents more than an awards ceremony—it is a movement documenting excellence, inspiring dreams, and building the collective pride that propels a state forward. The evening proved that when Odisha celebrates its jewels, it doesn't just honor past achievements; it illuminates pathways for countless others to follow.

As the evening concluded with standing ovations and emotional moments of recognition, one truth resonated powerfully: Odisha's greatest strength has always been its people—their resilience, their innovation, and their unwavering commitment to excellence while remaining rooted in values that define the state's soul.

The Honored Jewels of Odisha 2026

26 SHYAMAMANI DEVI

27 SITARAM AGRAWAL

28 SOUMYA RANJAN BISWAL

29 SP RAJGURU

30 SUJATA MOHAPATRA

31 VALENA VALENTINA

32 SURENDRA NATH PANDA

33 DR DAMAYANTI BESHRA

34 DEBASHIS DAS

35 DR. ASHOK KUMAR MAHAPATRA

36 DURGA CHARAN RANBIR

37 IGNACE TIRKEY

38 DR. KAILASH CHANDRA SAHU

39 MANASI PRADHAN

40 PRADYUMNA KUMAR MAHANANDIA

41 PRIYADARSHI MOHAPATRA

42 PRAHALLAD NAYAK

43 PRAMILA PRADHAN

44 ROOPA ROSHAN SAHOO

45 VISHAL KUMAR DEV

46 INJETI SRINIVAS

47 SUNIL MOHAPATRA

48 SOUMENDRA MATTAGAJASINGH

49 MAMATA BEHERA

50 YUGABRATA KAR













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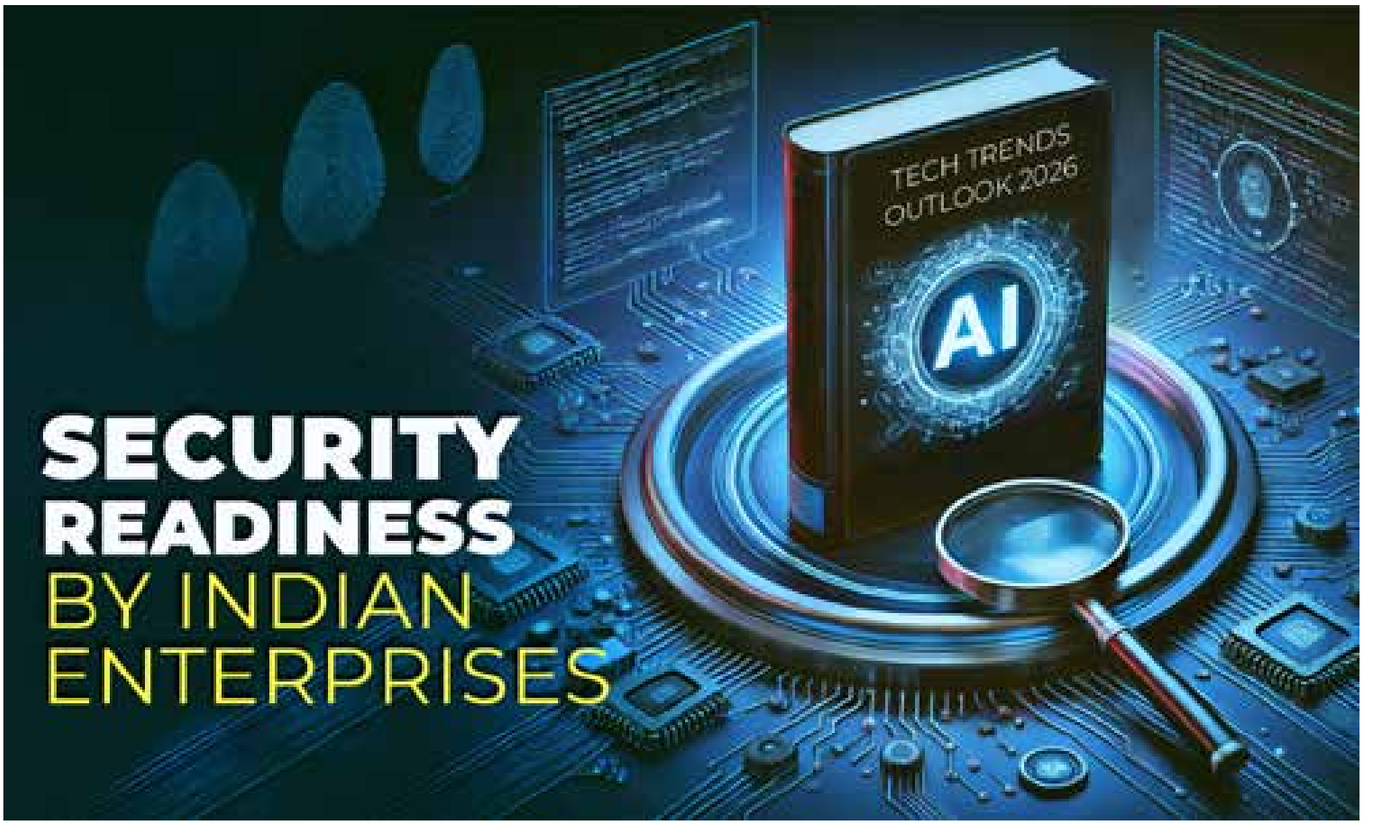


Security Readiness in the Age of AI: An OEM perspective

As India enters an AI-first era in 2026, enterprise security readiness has become a boardroom priority. With AI embedded across operations, cloud, data, and digital infrastructure, organisations face rising risks from cyber threats, deepfakes, and regulatory pressure –

Moving into 2026, we find the stakes for enterprise security becoming higher than ever. Organizations are increasingly recognizing that AI adoption brings not only transformative opportunities but also new and sophisticated threats.

As a result, enterprise security readiness has moved to the top of the boardroom agenda, with leaders focusing on strategies that combine advanced threat detection, adaptive defenses, and compliance frameworks. Protecting critical data, digital assets, and operational continuity in an AI-driven environment is no longer just an IT responsibility, but has become a strategic business imperative that demands executive oversight and cross-functional collaboration.

Microsoft's 2025 Threat Intelligence report points out that AI-assisted cyberattacks have increased across at least four government-backed actors with entities automating their attacks and exploiting cloud systems faster than humans can respond. The Ponemon Institute meanwhile, reports that downtime for large enterprises can cost up to $9,000 per minute, which can add up to significant losses.

SECURITY TRENDS TO LOOK OUT FOR IN 2026

According to Grant Bourzikas - CSO, Cloudflare, in 2026, AI will shift from an attacker's "helper" to an autonomous force multiplier, fundamentally rewiring how cyberattacks work. While the past year was filled with AI's contributions to basic malicious activities like social engineering, deepfakes, business email compromise and more, 2026 will see a continuation of these activities, but on a larger scale.

In other words, 2026 will be the year of real AI attacks. Threat actors will predominantly shift to launch malicious campaigns through vibe coding – exacerbating the speed and delivery of execution. They will increasingly use AI as a teacher or trainer to help them do reconnaissance, but not because they don't know how to launch a low-level attack.

Grant further adds that in 2026, one of the largest barriers to securing an organization will be wasted on tech that is old and antiquated. For most organizations, negotiating the renewal of security vendors is increasingly expensive, and one of the biggest headaches that CISOs face. Software inflation is at an all-time high, which now points towards hefty increases in renewal rates for 2026.

But are the tools we renew even necessary to combat today's threat actors? As the attack surface grows – with novel vulnerabilities discovered daily, alongside emerging threat actor groups, tactics and malware – CISOs must focus on eliminating tools that pose risks vs. adding additional tools to address risks.

Another area of concern is the compliance and the regulatory landscape. Regulatory pressures, like with the recently enacted Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (DPDP Act) in India mandates consent-based processing, data minimization, 72-hour breach notification, and strict compliance by 2026-2027, with penalties up to ₹250 crores. Enterprises and corporate houses are compelled to face strict, enforceable accountability for data fiduciaries, including mandatory breach reporting and, in many cases, localized data storage.

Having said that, enterprises therefore want a security foundation that allows them to innovate rapidly without creating new compliance concerns.

Cybercrime's new era: Automated, Intelligent, Scaled

VIVEK SRIVASTAVA
COUNTRY MANAGER, INDIA & SAARC AT FORTINET

"To combat the escalating threat of AI-driven cybercrime—including malware and deepfakes generated by tools like FraudGPT and ElevenLabs—Fortinet has launched expanded AI-powered solutions to empower organizations to stay ahead of threat actors and insider risks while ensuring users, data, and productivity remain secure. Fortinet Secure AI Data Center solution is the industry's first end-to-end framework purpose-built to protect AI infrastructures. Designed to secure the full AI stack—from data center infrastructure to applications and large language models (LLMs)—the solution delivers advanced AI threat defense with ultra-low latency. The Fortinet Secure AI Data Center solution offers protection for AI workflows and GPU clusters, utilizing ASIC acceleration and quantum-safe security. This framework unifies segmentation, LLM guardrails, and granular application defense under a single management plane, aiming to prevent data leakage and ensure compliance while maintaining performance and operational simplicity.

THE INDUSTRIALIZATION OF CYBERCRIME

Cybercrime is entering its industrial age, defined by automation, AI agents, and unprecedented scale. Defenders will now face adversaries organized for scale and speed. The challenge will no longer be simply detecting or blocking individual attacks, it will be to keep pace with an ecosystem that operates as an industry. To respond effectively, security programs must apply the same level of operational discipline, automation, and coordination that adversaries use to scale their offense. AI and automation will not replace defenders but will redefine their roles. Analysts will need to operate as system architects and decision-makers, guiding machine-speed operations through context, intuition, and oversight."

Dependence on Fragmented, Legacy Security Solutions is no longer the option

PRATIK SHAH
MANAGING DIRECTOR – INDIA & SAARC, F5

"As we stand in 2026, the AI-led transformation is no longer a future concept for Indian enterprises; it's a reality that is fundamentally reshaping their digital landscape. This has created a new battleground where both innovation and threats operate at machine speed, primarily targeting the applications and APIs that power these new services.

The era of relying on siloed, legacy security tools is over. They simply cannot provide the necessary context, performance, or consistent policy enforcement required to protect today's distributed, AI-driven architectures.

At F5, we believe that security must be as agile and intelligent as the applications it protects. Our approach is to provide a unified platform that integrates high-performance traffic management with advanced web and API protection, bot defense, and AI-aware controls. This enables Indian enterprises to embed security and performance into the very core of their digital services, allowing them to innovate confidently, meet compliance demands, and scale securely to maintain digital trust and drive growth".

Security at Machine Speed: The New Enterprise Mandate

HARIKRISHNA PRABHU
COO AT TECHNOBIND SOLUTIONS

"As enterprises enter an AI-first operating model, security is shifting from static defence to continuous, intelligence-led risk management. AI-driven threats in 2026 are faster, more adaptive and increasingly identity-centric, making traditional signature-based controls ineffective. Security platforms are therefore evolving to focus on behavioural analytics, real-time anomaly detection and automated response that can contain threats before they escalate.

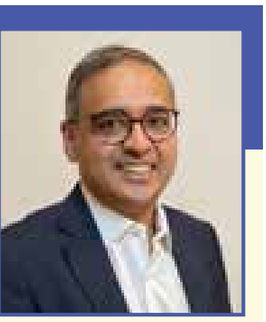
With the rise of deepfakes and synthetic identities, security frameworks are strengthening liveness detection, device trust and continuous authentication. At the same time, security automation is becoming predictive rather than reactive, enabling teams to anticipate attack paths and reduce dwell time significantly. For Indian enterprises, the focus is no longer on deploying more tools, but on building security stacks that learn, adapt and respond at machine speed.

OEM SECURITY CAPABILITIES VS CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

While OEMs continue to innovate rapidly, a gap remains in how these capabilities translate into real-world outcomes for Indian enterprises. Many organisations struggle to operationalize advanced security platforms across complex environments that include legacy systems, multi-cloud infrastructure and new AI workloads. Customers increasingly expect security insights to be contextual, prioritized and aligned to business risk and regulatory obligations. However, intelligence often remains fragmented, requiring significant effort to convert alerts into actionable decisions. There is also an expectation for faster deployment, simpler integration and measurable outcomes rather than feature-heavy implementations. Bridging this gap requires stronger solution engineering, localised risk context and an ecosystem approach that helps enterprises move from capability adoption to sustained security resilience."

Identity Resilience emerges as the backbone of AI-Driven Enterprises

BALAJI RAO
AREA VICE PRESIDENT, INDIA & SAARC, COMMVAULT



"As Indian enterprises accelerate toward an AI-first future, security readiness is emerging as a leadership priority rather than a purely technical concern. In the Agentic Future, where humans and AI act with greater autonomy and intention, security must extend beyond systems to the integrity of data, decisions, and outcomes. Concurrently, conversational AI is transforming how resilience is designed and executed. Teams can now assess recovery readiness, enforce policy, and manage protection across cloud, SaaS, and hybrid environments through intuitive, real-time interaction rather than manual orchestration. At the same time, protected data is being activated as a strategic AI asset, accessed through governed data environments that enable secure, compliant, and trustworthy AI adoption at scale.

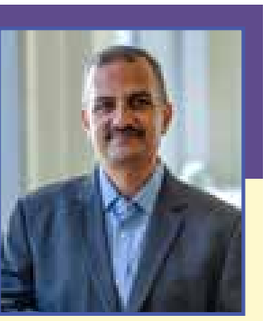
In India, this transformation is shaped by rapid cloud adoption and the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, where explicit control over data location, access, and recoverability is foundational to enterprise trust. This has prompted organisations to fundamentally rethink how recovery success is defined. At Commvault, we deliver this balance through Commvault Cloud capabilities, including Cleanroom Recovery, ThreatWise, and Cloud Rewind, enabling AI-driven threat detection, clean recovery validation, and policy-based data controls across cloud, SaaS, and hybrid environments.

CONTINUITY AND SECURITY IN AN AI-FIRST WORLD

Looking ahead, resilience, sovereignty, and quantum readiness are converging into an architectural foundation for long-term trust. As AI becomes deeply embedded across business processes, identity resilience will become central to continuity and security, ensuring that trusted users, machines, and autonomous agents remain verifiable throughout recovery and operational workflows. Preparing encryption and recovery architectures for a post-quantum future will be essential for organisations that aim to govern complexity, sustain confidence, and lead responsibly in an increasingly cloud-first economy."

Building a stronger security ecosystem through OEM–Partner synergy

MANISH ALSHI
SENIOR DIRECTOR, CHANNELS & ALLIANCES, CHECK POINT SOFTWARE TECHNOLOGIES INDIA & SOUTH ASIA



"Our approach for 2026 is firmly built around a prevention-first, AI-powered security model that can operate at the scale and complexity Indian organisations face today. At Check Point Software, AI is embedded across all of our solutions, powered by ThreatCloud AI, which uses more than 55 AI and machine-learning engines to analyse global threat telemetry and make billions of security decisions daily.

For CIOs and CISOs managing hybrid data centres, multi-cloud environments, large branch networks, and OT/IoT deployments, we are focusing on automation and consolidation — reducing tool sprawl while delivering consistent protection across network, cloud, email, endpoints, and collaboration platforms. For partners, this evolution creates opportunities to deliver simplified architectures, managed security services, and AI-driven SOC capabilities, helping customers modernize security without adding operational burden.

CHALLENGES & LIMITATIONS

One of the biggest gaps in India today is the difference between alert-driven security and outcome-driven security. Many enterprises still operate tools that generate large volumes of alerts but lack the automation and orchestration needed to respond at machine speed. Another major gap is operational complexity. Large Indian organisations often run dozens of disconnected security products across legacy infrastructure and modern cloud platforms.

Finally, customers are demanding stronger alignment with local regulatory and governance requirements, including India's DPDP Act, as well as clearer guidance on responsible AI usage. Enterprises want security solutions that are not only AI-powered, but also transparent, compliant, and partner-enabled. This is where OEMs and partners must work together — combining technology, local expertise, and services."

Autonomous AI Defense to shift the balance towards Defenders in 2026

HUZEFA MOTIWALA,
SENIOR DIRECTOR, TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS, INDIA AND SAARC, PALO ALTO NETWORKS

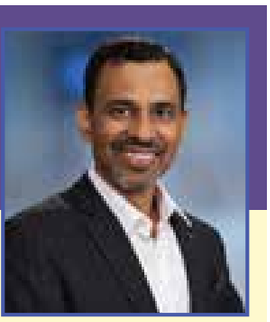
"AI has always been central to how we think about cybersecurity at Palo Alto Networks, as we built Precision AI to combine machine learning, deep learning and generative AI to ensure real-time security and safety. For what's ahead in 2026, we have introduced Prisma AIRS, which is designed to protect the entire enterprise AI ecosystem – AI apps, agents, models, and data, at every step. Our recent partnerships with the likes of Google and NVIDIA are also helping enterprises build, deploy, and scale AI with security embedded from the ground up. It broadly reflects our deeper understanding of how enterprises must evolve to address AI-threats: have security baked into every layer of AI adoption. In 2026, we are entering the 'Year of the Defender', where we predict; autonomous AI defence will slightly tip the scale in the defender's favour, driving down response times, reducing complexity and increasing visibility to quickly respond to cyberattacks.

BALANCING INNOVATION, COMPLIANCE, AND SCALABILITY

In reality, innovation, compliance and scalability can't be treated as competing priorities, they need to reinforce each other. As cloud, AI and automation converge, identity, data and infrastructure are becoming inseparable. That's driven our focus on a single unified platform – one where advanced capabilities are integrated by design and security can scale horizontally without adding operational complexity. At the same time, trust and governance remain non-negotiable.

While OEM and native security capabilities provide a baseline level of protection, they often fall short of what modern organizations actually need. What customers need, and what the market demands is security that is integrated, context-rich, and capable of scaling across cloud, AI, identity, endpoint, and OT/IoT environments."

Modern security defined not by point solutions, but by Integrated Defense



SUNIL KR. SHARMA,
MANAGING DIRECTOR & VP – SALES (INDIA & SAARC), SOPHOS

"Sophos has been using artificial intelligence and machine learning in our security solutions for many years, and in 2026 we are continuing to refine how AI is applied to detect and stop increasingly subtle, fast-moving threats. This includes identifying behavioural anomalies across endpoints, networks, cloud workloads, and email, which are often invisible to traditional, signature-based security tools. A key differentiator in our approach is what we call human-led AI. This combines advanced automation, such as Sophos Intercept X, with real-world threat intelligence from our Sophos X-Ops and Managed Detection and Response (MDR) teams.

In 2026, effective security is no longer about isolated point solutions. It is about delivering adaptive protection that continuously learns, correlates activity across environments, and responds quickly across the entire security lifecycle.

A SINGLE, UNIFIED, SECURED CLOUD-NATIVE PLATFORM

Many enterprises in India are pushing innovation through artificial intelligence while also navigating strict compliance, data residency, and regulatory requirements. Balancing these priorities can be challenging, particularly at scale. Sophos addresses this through a single, unified, cloud-native platform designed to operate seamlessly across hybrid infrastructures, multi-cloud environments, and distributed workforces. Whether organizations are running workloads on-premises, across multiple clouds, or supporting remote teams, Sophos solutions are built to scale without increasing operational complexity. Compliance is embedded directly into the platform through built-in security controls, centralized management, and comprehensive reporting capabilities.

Equally important, we recognize that security teams are often stretched thin. By prioritizing automation and centralized visibility, Sophos reduces day-to-day security overhead, enabling enterprises to scale their operations securely while allowing teams to focus on higher-value initiatives rather than manual tasks."

Behavioural Analytics and Identity Controls taking center stage gradually

PRAVEEN PATIL KULKARNI
DIRECTOR - SECURITY, RISK & GOVERNANCE, OPENTEXT INDIA

"AI driven threats in 2026 require security models that can understand behaviour, identity, and data context with far more precision. Agentic AI is also becoming a new attack surface, so security needs to extend beyond traditional endpoints and into how agents are built, what they can access, and what actions they take. The direction the industry is moving toward involves greater use of behavioural analytics, stronger identity controls, and closer integration between security and data workflows. At OpenText, that means strengthening identity-first and data-centric controls, securing AI across the SDLC, and improving continuous monitoring and response so risky agent behaviour or sensitive data exposure can be detected and contained early.

There is also growing emphasis on detecting synthetic content, deepfake enabled fraud, and AI generated attack patterns. The priority is to design systems that can analyse signals in real time, surface the right risks, and support faster decision making for security teams.

SCALING INNOVATION WITHOUT COMPROMISING COMPLIANCE

Enterprises want a security foundation that allows them to innovate rapidly without creating new compliance concerns. This is where OpenText focuses its efforts—bringing together identity-first, data-centric and continuous monitoring controls that are built for the realities of modern hybrid environments. OpenText helps customers build AI securely by integrating security testing directly into the software development lifecycle. Finally, our continuous monitoring and response capabilities bring together extended detection and response, security information and event management, security orchestration and response, identity threat detection, and digital forensics and incident response."

Moving beyond Reactive Monitoring towards Proactive and Resilient Security

DIPESH KAURA
COUNTRY DIRECTOR- INDIA & SAARC, SECURONIX

"At Securonix, AI has been central to our security operations for more than a decade, well before generative AI entered the mainstream. We have long applied machine learning and behavioral analytics to help organizations detect threats that traditional, rule-based approaches often miss. What is changing today is the role AI plays. As attackers increasingly use AI to move faster and evade controls, security teams can no longer rely on AI only to assist with detection. The focus is shifting toward greater autonomy, where AI helps anticipate risk, reduce manual effort, and act at machine speed, while keeping humans firmly in control.

Looking toward 2026, Securonix is evolving from AI-augmented detection to agentic AI–driven security operations through our Unified Defense SIEM. This is supported by a native cloud data lake with a full year of hot, searchable data, providing visibility before, during, and after an incident. The result is a shift from reactive monitoring to proactive, resilient security operations.

CHALLENGES & GAPS

OEMs typically secure their own environments effectively, but that level of control does not always extend to third-party vendors that operate independently. This creates gaps in the supply chain, where a single weak link can expose the broader OEM ecosystem to risk. There is also a growing expectation for unified, single-pane-of-glass visibility across the full environment. In addition, while customers expect tools that support investigation and response, several OEM offerings stop at alert generation, leaving security teams to manually piece together context and take action."

Extending Security beyond the Basics

VIKASH YADAV
HEAD OF ENTERPRISE FOR INDIA, KASPERSKY

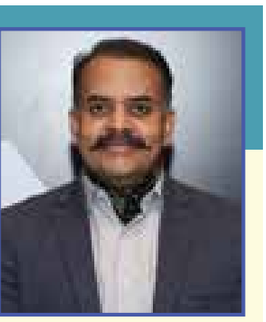
"At Kaspersky, our security solutions are ready with the clear understanding that AI-driven threats will become more frequent and more sophisticated by 2026. We are embedding advanced AI and machine learning capabilities directly into our detection engines to identify anomalies, unknown threats, and AI-assisted attacks in real time. This approach is supported by our secure-by-design philosophy and continuous alignment with globally recognized standards such as ISO/IEC 27001, which strengthens our overall data protection and risk management practices.

Alongside automation, we rely heavily on expert-led threat research to understand how cybercriminals are weaponizing AI. This combination allows us to adapt quickly to changing attack techniques and deliver proactive protection rather than reactive defence. Our enterprise offerings are built to balance innovation, compliance, and scalability without forcing organizations to compromise on any one area. Compliance is embedded into our platforms through alignment with international standards and best practices, helping enterprises meet regulatory requirements with confidence.

SHORTAGE OF SKILLED PERSONNELS STILL PERSISTS

As cyber threats grow more sophisticated and AI-driven, customer expectations are evolving faster than traditional security capabilities. Organizations now demand deeper visibility, advanced threat detection, and rapid response that extend beyond default security layers. A critical challenge remains the shortage of skilled expertise required to proactively build cyber-resilient systems and respond to incidents in an intelligent, autonomous manner. At Kaspersky, we help close these gaps by complementing baseline protections with intelligence-driven, enterprise-grade security that is designed to scale and evolve alongside customer needs."

Advanced AI, Automation and Contextual Response for Holistic Security



GANESH IYER
MANAGING DIRECTOR, INDIA AND SAARC, TRELLIX

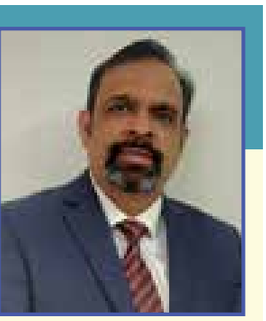
"In 2026, we are witnessing a seismic shift in the threat landscape, with adversaries increasingly leveraging AI and automation to evade legacy defenses. At Trellix, our security solutions have evolved to meet these challenges head-on, embedding advanced AI-assisted threat detection, automation, and contextual response capabilities across the entire attack surface, from endpoints and networks to cloud and identity. Our products continuously ingest and correlate telemetry, enabling real-time, data-driven insights to help security teams detect and prioritise sophisticated threats faster. Native integrations with ecosystem partners ensure threat intelligence and detection logic flow seamlessly across existing tools, enhancing overall resilience.

BALANCING INNOVATION WITH SCALABILITY & COMPLIANCE

Balancing cutting-edge innovation with regulatory compliance and enterprise-grade scalability is essential, particularly in a market like India, where digital growth is accompanied by evolving regulatory expectations and diverse infrastructure. Trellix solutions are therefore engineered to achieve this. Innovation is realised through advanced threat detection models, AI-enabled analytics, and workflow automation to streamline investigations and accelerate response times. At the same time, our solutions embed compliance-friendly controls and reporting frameworks that help customers align with regional regulations, including data localisation considerations and audit requirements.

Scalability is built into the architecture of our products. We also prioritise open integrations to complement existing tools and processes, reducing friction and maximising the value of current investments. For Indian enterprises, this balanced approach yields an innovative yet pragmatic security posture, compliant by design and capable of evolving as threats and regulations continue to change."

AI solutions becoming more Agentic to strengthen Security Operations



AJAY KUMAR JOSHI
COUNTRY HEAD, ESET INDIA AND THE SAARC REGION

"Cybercriminals are increasingly using automation and intelligent tools to scale their operations, making threats faster, more targeted, and harder to identify. In response, we are continuing to develop and refine our AI capabilities, with a focus on becoming more agentic over time to better support security teams. ESET is making major investments in advanced threat research and telemetry, and this helps the company to identify new attack methods early on and use that information in all of its products and makes it possible to respond to new threats more quickly. Our system still heavily relies on human expertise in addition to automation. ESET helps businesses improve their security posture against increasingly complex and automated cyber threats via deep research, ongoing monitoring and adaptive detection.

With the goal to help businesses to accept new technologies and adapt to growing breaches without impeding innovation, we incorporate security into the very foundation of our solutions. In order to help customers, accomplish compliance goals and confidently report on their security posture, we also link our solutions with known industry standards and regulatory regulations. With scalability being the primary focus, our solutions can be deployed across small, medium and large businesses while maintaining performance.

MEETING CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS IN AN AI-DRIVEN ERA

Simplicity and clarity are two major areas where OEM security capabilities and customer expectations differ. Customers expect instant threat visibility and precise instructions on how to react. There has also been a growing need for uniform security across cloud workloads, hybrid workflows and endpoints. Businesses find it difficult to gain a comprehensive understanding of risk when security functions in divisions."

Countering AI-driven threats with Adaptive, Intelligence-powered security

THANGARAJ PETCHIAPPAN
CTO – SECURITY, INFRASTRUCTURE & MANAGED SERVICES, ILINK

"In 2026, iLink's security strategy is laser-focused on combating AI-driven threats with adaptive, intelligence-powered solutions. Leveraging Microsoft's ecosystem—Security Copilot, Defender, Purview, Entra, Intune, and Sentinel—we integrate advanced threat modelling and automated response capabilities. Security Copilot agents like Threat Investigation, IAM Shield, and Attack Surface Reduction use generative AI to detect privilege misuse, correlate anomalies, and neutralize high-risk exposures in real time. Our Beak platform, built on Azure AI, enhances this by orchestrating vulnerability management, incident response, and compliance automation through low-code/no-code agents. Together, these innovations strengthen Zero Trust, accelerate MTTR, and deliver predictive defense against polymorphic attacks and AI-powered social engineering. By combining proactive threat intelligence with autonomous remediation, we ensure organizations stay ahead of evolving adversarial AI tactics—transforming security from reactive to anticipatory.

GAPS BETWEEN SECURITY TOOLS & CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

Even though OEM security tools are powerful, there is still a gap between what these tools provide and what customers expect. Most OEM solutions work well on their own, but they often operate in silos across endpoint, identity, cloud, and data environments. Customers expect one clear, unified view of security and faster detection of risks across hybrid and multi-cloud setups, which is still difficult to achieve using only native tools.

Another major gap is day-to-day operations. OEM platforms generate many alerts, but customers struggle to prioritize them and take quick, consistent action. With the rise of AI-driven attacks and constantly changing cloud workloads, organizations want automated responses, easy customization, and clear AI-driven insights, not just dashboards and reports."

India entering an era dominated by AI agents and a complex digital workforce

ROHAN VAIDYA
AREA VICE PRESIDENT, INDIA & SAARC, CYBERARK

"Identity security will be central to the conflict between human adaptability and technological advancement in 2026. India is entering an era dominated by AI agents, shrinking certificate lifespans, hardware scarcity, and an increasingly complex digital workforce. In this new reality, trust will be just as important as innovation for building resilience. The first major shift will come from shorter certificate lifecycles. Starting in March 2026, the maximum validity for digital certificates will drop from 398 to 200 days, and Indian businesses will struggle to adapt as many are still manually managing certificate lifecycles. This will result in outages driven by expired certificates or unmanaged machine identities.

Autonomous AI agents will become a standard part of business workflows. As Indian companies adopt frameworks like the Model Context Protocol, identity will become the main control point. It will be the only reliable "kill switch" when an AI agent acts unpredictably or gets compromised. The benefits of AI won't be available to everyone. Limited access to advanced chips, rising cloud costs, and data center limitations will strengthen the dominance of major tech companies. For many Indian organisations, scaling AI will be a privilege, not a standard capability. Human behavior will also be a key factor. Economic pressures will likely increase financially motivated insider threats. The use of unauthorized "shadow AI" tools will grow faster than companies can create rules to manage them. It will become harder to spot false information and social engineering attacks as AI-generated content becomes common."

Security: AI to supercharge cyber threats across APAC

REUBEN KOH
DIRECTOR OF SECURITY TECHNOLOGY & STRATEGY AT AKAMAI

"AI is fundamentally changing the economics of cyberattacks in APAC. Adversaries are no longer scaling through manpower, but rather through automation. Leaders can't rely on human-paced defenses in a machine-paced threat environment. In 2026, security teams need to operate at the same velocity as the attackers by detecting, analyzing, and containing threats in real time. This starts with modernizing API governance, investing in automated threat containment, and strengthening resilience across supply chains. Organizations that make this shift early will be the ones to better protect customer trust and maintain business continuity in an evolving AI-driven threat landscape."

COMPRESSED ATTACK TIMELINES DUE TO AUTONOMOUS AI

We anticipate a fundamental shift in how cyberattacks unfold in APAC in 2026 with faster, more automated and increasingly self-directed threats powered by AI. Attackers will leverage both generative AI and autonomous AI capabilities that can scan for weakness, test entry points and launch exploits with minimal human involvement. This machine-driven model compresses the timelines of breaches that once unfolded over weeks to within hours, raising risk across high-value digital markets such as Singapore, Korea and Japan.

THE FULL DEMOCRATIZATION OF RANSOMWARE

Ransomware will become fully commoditized in 2026, transforming into a mass-scale cybercrime economy. With off-the-shelf Ransomware-as-a-Service subscriptions, AI-powered "vibe-hacking," and growing collaboration between cybercriminals, hacktivists, and state-aligned actors, launching an extortion campaign will require far less expertise than before."

From Compute to Cooling: How are AI workloads reshaping Datacenter designs

The rapid adoption of Artificial intelligence (AI), especially large models and generative AI, has driven unprecedented demand for high-performance compute capacity. Traditional data centers aren't optimized for these workloads, which need far more processing power and memory.

The result - purpose-built AI data centers with advanced GPUs and AI accelerators are becoming essential infrastructure for enterprises and cloud providers alike. They support large-scale AI workloads, including machine learning, deep learning, and data analytics and are equipped with high-performance computing resources to efficiently process massive datasets.

VIPIN JAIN
PRESIDENT, HYPERSCALE GROWTH, DELIVERY & INNOVATION, CTRLS DATACENTERS

PIYUSH PRAKASHCHANDRA SOMANI
PROMOTER, MANAGING DIRECTOR AND CHAIRMAN, ESDS

PARITOSH PRAJAPATI
CEO
GX GROUP

PANKAJ MALIK
CEO AND WHOLE-TIME DIRECTOR AT INVENIA-STL NETWORKS

MANOJ PAUL
MD
EQUINIX INDIA

BHARATH DESAREDDY
FOUNDER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF SMARTSOC

AI-ready data centers feature redesigned infrastructure to accommodate higher power density, advanced cooling (including liquid cooling), and optimized networking to handle sustained, compute-intensive workloads. These enhancements help boost performance and scalability while supporting next-generation AI applications. These help to accelerate AI model training and inference, enabling faster insights, predictions, and automation for businesses and research.

The main components of artificial intelligence (AI) datacenters are hardware, software, and services. Hardware refers to physical computing and networking components such as servers, storage devices, networking switches, and cooling/power infrastructure that enable AI workloads and data processing. It includes various data center types such as hyperscale data centers, colocation data centers, edge data centers, and others.

AI data centers are becoming critical infrastructure for sectors like finance, healthcare, manufacturing, and cloud computing, supporting innovation and enabling services that were previously impractical due to computational limits. Enterprises see them as key enablers of digital transformation.

AI DATACENTER MARKET SIZE

The AI data center market has seen strong growth and investment, with the global sector expanding rapidly and forecast to continue doing so. Increased enterprise adoption of AI services and cloud-based AI deployments fuels long-term demand for scalable, efficient AI data center capacity.

The AI Datacenters market size has reached to $16.57 billion in 2024, according to the Business Research Company. The market is further expected to grow to $59.39 billion in 2029 at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 29%.

This growth can be attributed to increasing demand for high-performance computing, rising cloud service deployment, increasing investments in data center infrastructure, growing need for energy-efficient solutions, and rising demand for automated operations.

AI WORKLOADS INFLUENCING DATACENTER DESIGN

As is seen in the recent times, the surge of AI applications has contributed to unprecedented demand on data centre infrastructure. Existing facilities are no longer fit for purpose and AI-ready capacity is in short supply.

As AI, machine learning, and GPU-intensive workloads move from experimentation to production, datacenters are facing sustained increases in power density and thermal load. Unlike conventional enterprise applications, AI workloads generate concentrated heat over longer durations, making cooling design and operational efficiency critical to performance, uptime, and energy management.

"In this context, AI readiness is increasingly defined by how effectively a datacenter can manage heat at scale," points out Piyush Prakashchandra Somani, Promoter, Managing Director and Chairman, ESDS. "At ESDS, AI-ready infrastructure is approached through measured capacity enablement, hybrid cooling architectures, and operational controls that align with real-world workload requirements."

ESDS's current datacenter capacity is configured to support AI and GPU-intensive workloads. This capacity is supported by higher rack power densities, resilient power infrastructure, and optimized airflow management designed to handle elevated thermal loads.

"AI readiness is assessed and enabled at the rack and zone level, rather than being uniformly applied across entire facilities. This approach enables higher-density deployments to coexist alongside traditional enterprise workloads, while maintaining thermal stability and operational continuity," explains Piyush.

As AI workloads continue to influence datacenter design parameters, cooling strategies must balance adaptability with operational discipline. ESDS's approach emphasizes selective AI readiness, hybrid cooling deployment, and data-driven thermal management, ensuring that higher compute densities are supported without compromising efficiency, reliability, or compliance.

"AI workloads today span model training, inference, and data-in-motion, each with distinct performance and connectivity requirements. A significant and expanding share of Equinix's global and India footprint is purpose-built to support all three," explains Manoj Paul, MD, Equinix India. "Our newest facilities, CN1 in Chennai and the soon-to-launch MB3 in Mumbai, are engineered as AI-ready datacenters supporting higher power densities with advanced cooling capabilities, and the enormous fiber interconnection required for GPU clusters. While these Equinix facilities are designed to support centralized AI training workloads, they are very uniquely designed and positioned to support latency-sensitive AI Inferencing closer to users with interconnection solutions to reduce latency."

"We are also scaling liquid-cooling readiness across our platform, with deployments booked in 17 metros globally and plans to expand advanced liquid-cooling technologies such as direct-to-chip to more than 100 IBXs in over 45 metros. Taken together, these investments mean a large portion of our data center capacity is already AI-workload ready, with readiness increasing rapidly as demand grows," Manoj adds.

Agrees Vipin Jain, President, Hyperscale Growth, Delivery & Innovation, CtrlS Datacenters, who believe that the Indian datacenter industry is at an inflection point, particularly when it comes to cooling and infrastructure design.

"Cooling systems are undergoing a fundamental transformation, and the industry is actively exploring Liquid cooling and

chiller-less architectures that can significantly improve efficiency and sustainability. As rack densities rise and AI-driven workloads become mainstream, traditional cooling and layout assumptions will no longer suffice, prompting a complete rethinking of how data halls are designed and operated," says Vipin.

"We are already seeing early indicators of this shift in physical infrastructure. Floor loading capacities are expected to increase, while the ratio between electrical infrastructure and server will increase. Power subscriptions are set to rise sharply, driven largely by AI workloads, which are far more power intensive and fluctuating than conventional computing."

He further continues, "At CtrlS, we have designed our cooling infrastructure to meet the explosive growth of AI workloads. Our facilities are built with modular and hybrid cooling architectures—combining high-efficiency air cooling with advanced liquid and direct-to-chip cooling readiness. We are deploying high-efficiency cooling systems that dynamically adjust to real-time IT load, ensuring energy is not wasted during partial-load operations. Reducing cooling energy consumption is another strategic priority to improve datacenter power usage efficiency. We are approaching this through a combination of design innovation, advanced controls, and responsible operations."

Pankaj Malik suggests that cooling resilience is treated as mission-critical within AI infrastructure, supported by proactive operational design, intelligent control systems, and fault-tolerant architecture. "The objective is clear - eliminate cooling-related downtime even as computational and thermal loads intensify. Redundancy is built into the cooling layer through N+1 and 2N architectures, ensuring uninterrupted operation even in the event of component failure. AI-powered temperature monitoring and predictive analytics identify emerging hotspots early, preventing thermal runaway before performance is impacted. Cooling is dynamically aligned with workload intensity through software-defined controls, avoiding sudden stress peaks during high AI utilisation. High-density GPU environments are stabilised using a combination of liquid cooling, in-row cooling, and hot-aisle cold-aisle containment, designed to manage concentrated heat loads at rack and chip level," he explains.

"The result is resilient operations under sustained high-density AI workloads, maximum uptime, and consistent protection of AI performance at scale," he says.

AIR COOLING VS LIQUID COOLING – WHICH IS BETTER

AI workloads are pushing datacenters to their thermal limits, demanding advanced cooling strategies. Traditional air-cooling can't efficiently support high-density racks powered by GPUs and accelerators.

Operators now require liquid cooling, immersive systems, and real-time thermal analytics to maintain performance, reduce energy costs, and prevent downtime. Ensuring AI-readiness means modernizing cooling infrastructure, improving heat management efficiency, and adopting scalable designs for future high-density deployments.

Pankaj Malik, CEO and Whole-time Director at Invenia-STL Networks recounts, "Our standard deployments continue to leverage proven air-cooled solutions, which remain the most practical and widely adopted cooling approach across data centre environments today. However, as the industry approaches a tipping point driven by compute-intensive GPUs and rapidly rising rack densities, cooling architectures must evolve in parallel."

He further continues, "As a system integration company, we are proactively addressing this shift through a hybrid cooling architecture that forms the cornerstone of our future-ready infrastructure strategy. This approach enables a seamless transition from traditional air-cooling to liquid-assisted and direct-to-chip cooling introduced precisely where workload intensity and performance demands require it, without operational disruption."

By integrating these technologies within a unified architecture, Pankaj explains that they ensure continuity, scalability, and resilience across customer environments. "This positions us to support customers as their performance, density, and sustainability requirements evolve, while allowing us to design, recommend, and implement the most appropriate cooling solution tailored to each customer's specific operational, technical, and business needs."

Equinix operates a hybrid cooling model designed to balance performance, sustainability, and regional climate considerations. In India, we primarily deploy air-cooled chiller systems, which are extremely water-efficient and well-suited to local infrastructure contexts.

"Globally and in India, we also support advanced liquid-cooling technologies, including direct-to-chip, immersion, and rear-door heat exchangers, and offer a vendor-neutral approach so customers can deploy the hardware that best meets their AI density needs. We have liquid-cooling deployments across all three regions, including our new data centers in Chennai and Mumbai. Earlier this year, we demonstrated a full liquid-cooling environment in Hong Kong in collaboration with Dell and Schneider Electric and this facility is open for POC for enterprises planning to deploy liquid cooling for their private Ai deployment," explains Manoj Paul.

SEMICONDUCTOR BREAKTHROUGHS RESHAPING AI DATACENTER PERFORMANCE

The rapid adoption of AI workloads is reshaping semiconductor priorities toward delivering higher performance efficiency, faster development cycles, and closer alignment between silicon design and system requirements. Advanced chip technologies, especially specialized processors like GPUs, ASICs, and customer AI accelerators are unlocking new levels of performance and efficiency that were previously unattainable with general-purpose CPUs alone.

As AI chip architectures grow in size and complexity, manufacturers are under pressure to improve performance per watt while managing power, thermal, and deployment constraints. To meet these demands, the industry is advancing toward smaller process nodes such as 2nm, 1.8nm, and below, along with wider adoption of advanced 3D packaging technologies including system-on-integrated-chip, system-on-wafer, and chip-on-wafer-on-substrate architectures. These approaches enable higher levels of integration and scalability, which are essential for supporting large-scale AI workloads in datacenter environments.

"At the same time, semiconductor manufacturers are placing greater emphasis on hardware-software co-design, recognizing that silicon performance alone is insufficient to meet AI datacenter requirements," explains Bharath Desareddy, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of SmartSoC Solutions, A Virtusa Company. "Closer alignment between chip engineering, system software, cloud infrastructure, and application layers helps shorten development cycles, improve system-level efficiency, and support faster deployment of AI-driven datacenter platforms. Virtusa's integration of SmartSoC aligns with this priority by bringing semiconductor engineering closer to the broader software and infrastructure stack."

Paritosh Prajapati, CEO, GX Group states that new semiconductor designs are making AI chips much faster and more energy-efficient, allowing datacenters to process far more data in less space. "AI-ready datacenters are no longer defined by floor space, but by how effectively they can manage thermals and move data at scale," he believes. "The rise of AI is pushing semiconductor manufacturers to move away from general-purpose processors toward chips purpose-built for AI workloads. Energy efficiency, high-speed memory, and faster, lower-loss data movement between chips have become top priorities.

He further continues, "This is where quantum and photonics technologies play a critical role, which is why GX has established its dedicated R&D and design hub in India under GX Quantum Photonics Pvt Ltd to advance optical interconnects and next-generation architectures. At the same time, manufacturers are working more closely with large cloud providers to secure long-term supply and co-design solutions that meet real, high-density datacenter requirements."

AI, Risk, and Readiness: The VAR Test of 2026

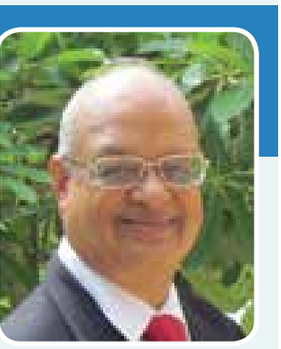
As India steps decisively into an AI-first era in 2026, value-added resellers (VARs) and technology partners find themselves at a pivotal inflection point. Artificial intelligence is no longer confined to pilots or isolated use cases; it is becoming deeply embedded across enterprise operations, cloud platforms, cybersecurity frameworks, and core digital infrastructure. This shift is forcing VARs to reimagine their role—from traditional solution integrators to trusted AI transformation partners capable of delivering secure, scalable, and outcome-driven AI at enterprise scale.

Insights from across the channel ecosystem reveal that readiness in 2026 is less about access to technology and more about execution maturity. While cloud and compute are increasingly available, challenges around data readiness, skills shortages, AI-aware security, and governance remain significant barriers to large-scale adoption. Partners consistently point to rising risks such as deepfakes, identity fraud, and data misuse, underscoring the need for security-by-design, Zero Trust architectures, and privacy-first AI deployments.

Cloud-native and hybrid architectures have emerged as the dominant foundation for enterprise AI, balancing scalability with regulatory compliance, data sovereignty, and cost efficiency. At the same time, alignment with Digital India and IndiaAI is shaping partner strategies around responsible AI, skilling, indigenous innovation, and inclusive adoption. Together, these factors will determine which VARs can move beyond experimentation to deliver trusted, governed, and business-impacting AI in 2026—and which will struggle to keep pace.

CUSTOMER CLARITY, NOT TECHNOLOGY, WILL DRIVE OUR AI JOURNEY IN 2026

BIREN SHAH
MD, Adit Microsys Pvt. Ltd.



We are currently at an initial stage of AI solutions and are certainly not at enterprise-scale AI deployment yet. The biggest challenge we see is not skills, security, compliance, or infrastructure, but the lack of clarity among most customers on what direction they want to take for AI deployment. At present, we see only small and often half-hearted attempts at AI deployment, except in cases where there is a clear use case and a solution in sight. Without this clarity, it is difficult for enterprises to move beyond limited pilots toward broader AI adoption.

In addressing risks such as deepfakes, cyber fraud, and data privacy, our approach is to select solution providers who have already considered and addressed these concerns. At a partner level, it becomes critical to choose wisely and deploy solutions carefully to ensure such risks are minimised. AI leads organisations into uncertain zones where risks are inherent, and it is unlikely that any solution provider can fully understand or completely eliminate these risks.

Since most AI initiatives today are still at a pilot stage, cloud-native and hybrid architectures are effectively a given in shaping our AI roadmap. Solutions that are only on-premise are not likely to take off, and we do not expect to focus on such offerings. With regard to initiatives such as Digital India and IndiaAI, it is still too early to foresee their relevance, and our focus will remain on how AI solutions align with the specific problems and goals of customer AI initiatives.

PREPARED BY STRATEGY, NOT REACTION FOR ENTERPRISE-SCALE AI IN 2026

GURPREET SINGH
Founder and MD, Arrow PC Network Pvt. Ltd.

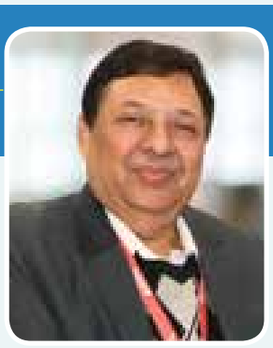
We are prepared by strategy, not by reaction. Our AI readiness is anchored in cloud-scale infrastructure, automation-first architectures, and security-led deployment models. The real challenge is not infrastructure, but skills maturity and responsible adoption of AI. That is where we invest heavily, upskilling teams with AI across departments, standardising AI governance, and embedding security and compliance into every AI workload from day one.

AI without trust is a liability. We address risks such as deepfakes, cyber fraud, and data privacy through zero-trust security models, strong identity frameworks, continuous threat monitoring, and data governance aligned with Indian regulations. For deepfakes and fraud, Arrow PC Network integrates AI-driven detection, behavioural analytics, and incident-response automation. Privacy is not an afterthought; it is an architectural principle designed into every AI deployment.

Cloud-native and hybrid architectures are foundational to our AI roadmap. Cloud-native platforms deliver scale, speed, and agility, while hybrid architectures ensure data sovereignty, latency control, and regulatory alignment. Our roadmap blends both, placing intelligence where it delivers the most value, from core data centres to the edge. This approach aligns closely with Digital India and IndiaAI, enabling local data processing, secure digital infrastructure, AI-led efficiency, and responsible innovation that is compliant, scalable, India-ready, inclusive, secure, and sustainable for the nation's digital future. It supports enterprises building trusted AI systems across industries and public sector environments nationwide securely responsibly.

BRIDGING GOVERNANCE, SECURITY GAPS TO SCALE ENTERPRISE AI IN 2026

DR. MUKUL GUPTA
Director, B M Infotrade Pvt. Ltd.



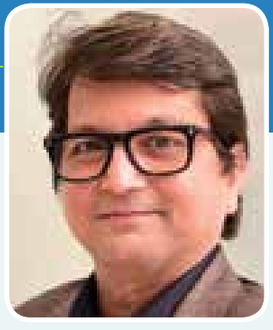
We at BM Infotrade are well prepared to support enterprise-scale AI adoption in 2026, with our strengths centred on cloud readiness, cybersecurity, and Data & AI empowerment. As AI moves rapidly from experimentation to enterprise-wide implementation, our focus is to help customers deploy AI in a scalable, secure manner aligned with business outcomes. The key challenges are not confined to a single area; skills gaps, security concerns, compliance expectations, infrastructure readiness, and data maturity issues often overlap. Many organisations face fragmented data, inconsistent processes, and unclear governance, which slows AI adoption beyond pilot stages. Our role is to bridge these gaps with a structured, responsible approach.

BM Infotrade follows a security-first approach to AI implementations as threats such as deepfakes, impersonation scams, and AI-driven cyberattacks continue to evolve. Cybersecurity measures are integrated from the outset, including strong identity and access management, secure architectural design, continuous monitoring, and risk mitigation frameworks. We adopt a DevSecOps approach where security controls, policy enforcement, and monitoring are embedded across the delivery lifecycle. For data privacy, we emphasise governance-led deployments with controlled data access, accountability, validation workflows, audit trails, and compliance-aligned data handling.

Cloud-native and hybrid architectures play a critical role in shaping our AI roadmap, as enterprise environments are rarely uniform. Cloud-native platforms enable scalability and rapid adoption, while hybrid architectures remain essential for regulatory, latency, and operational requirements. This flexible approach aligns closely with Digital India and the IndiaAI mission, supporting secure, scalable, inclusive, and outcome-driven AI adoption.

VAR READINESS IN 2026 RELIES ON HEART, PERSEVERANCE AND COMMITMENT

ZAKIR HUSSAIN RANGWALA
CEO, BD Software Distribution Pvt. Ltd.



2026 is not just another year in the channel; it is a year testing every Value Added Reseller (VAR) — in skills and spirit. Beneath dashboards, certifications, KPIs, and quarterly targets are stories of people striving to stay relevant in a world that refuses to slow down. For many VARs, the biggest challenge isn't technology, but the constant pressure of learning new solutions while serving existing customers, managing growing expectations with limited staff, and speaking confidently about technologies barely known a year ago. Yet every morning, they show up again, driven by dedication and human resilience.

The landscape has shifted. Customers expect VARs to protect them from cyber threats, guide cloud migrations, automate workflows, and advise on AI adoption. They seek strategists, consultants, and counsellors simultaneously. While some partners have resources to scale, many smaller VARs rely on grit, relationships, and experience rather than armies of specialists. Readiness in 2026 is not perfection; it is perseverance — the courage to learn, the humility to seek help, and the commitment to protect customers because relationships matter.

Behind every VAR business is a human being — someone reassuring a customer late at night, training their team after hours, and balancing company growth with employee livelihoods. Vendors who recognize this, treating partners as people rather than pipelines, will see the channel thrive. Readiness in 2026 comes from empathy, collaboration, shared purpose, and above all, heart — the determination to serve customers, no matter how complex the world becomes.

SECURE, GOVERNANCE-LED AI WILL DRIVE ENTERPRISE-SCALE ADOPTION IN 2026

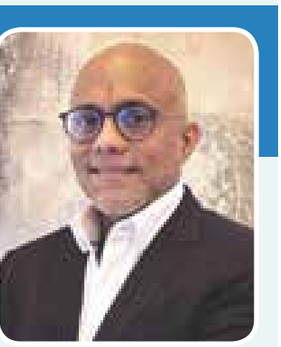
RADHESH RAMANATHAN
Director - Infra, DigitalTrack Solutions Pvt. Ltd.

DigitalTrack Solutions is well prepared to deliver enterprise-scale AI in 2026, with readiness built across secure infrastructure, skilled teams, strong governance, and partner ecosystems. We design AI solutions that scale across hybrid and multi-cloud environments while embedding security, privacy, and compliance by default. The biggest adoption challenge remains skills and organisational readiness, followed closely by security and trust. Compliance requirements are increasing but manageable with proper governance, while infrastructure challenges can be addressed through right-sized architectures, enabling customers to move confidently from pilots to production at scale.

Here, AI-related risks are addressed through a security-first and responsible AI approach. Deepfake risks are mitigated through strong identity controls, multi-factor authentication, contextual verification, and human-in-the-loop approvals for high-risk use cases. Cyber fraud is managed through secure-by-design architectures, isolated AI environments, access controls, continuous monitoring, and anomaly detection to identify misuse. Data privacy is ensured through strict data minimisation, encryption in transit and at rest, and never using customer data to train shared models without explicit consent, aligned with regulations and enterprise governance.

Cloud-native and hybrid architectures are foundational to our AI roadmap. Cloud-native platforms enable rapid innovation, elastic scalability, and efficient MLOps through containerisation, Kubernetes, and automated pipelines. Hybrid architectures allow sensitive or regulated data to remain on-premises while leveraging cloud AI. This approach aligns with Digital India and IndiaAI by supporting local data residency, DPDP compliance, inclusive adoption, and India's vision for trusted, ethical, and scalable AI.

VARS MUST DELIVER SECURE, SCALABLE AI WITH MEASURABLE BUSINESS IMPACT IN 2026



SUDHIR KOTHARI
CEO & MD, Embee Software Pvt. Ltd.

As India enters an AI-first era in 2026, VARs are evaluated not just on technology access but on execution readiness — the ability to deliver AI securely, at scale, and with measurable business outcomes. At Embee Software, our readiness is built on years of helping enterprises modernize cloud platforms, strengthen cybersecurity, and operationalize data and AI responsibly. Enterprise-scale AI adoption is often challenged by fragmented data environments, weak governance, and security gaps. While skills are critical, trusted data, resilient cloud infrastructure, and integrated security are essential to move from AI experimentation to production-grade, outcome-driven deployments aligned with business priorities.

AI amplifies both opportunity and risk. Deepfakes, identity abuse, and AI-assisted cyberattacks are active threats. Embee Software addresses these through a security-by-design approach, combining identity-first protection, Zero Trust architecture, continuous monitoring, and SOC-led response. Our Cyber Defense Centre detects, analyzes, and mitigates threats in real time. Clear data lineage, access controls, and regulatory compliance ensure AI systems operate within ethical and legal boundaries.

Cloud-native and hybrid architectures are central to our AI roadmap, enabling scalable, compliant deployments across on-prem, cloud, and hybrid environments. This flexibility allows enterprises to modernize without disruption and scale AI responsibly across industries like BFSI, healthcare, manufacturing, and the public sector. Aligned with Digital India and IndiaAI initiatives, our services strengthen cybersecurity, unify data, and enable responsible AI adoption, helping enterprises transform with secure, scalable, and purpose-driven technology that delivers sustained business impact.

EKIN READIES ENTERPRISE-SCALE AI FOR 2026 WITH SECURE, HYBRID-FIRST DEPLOYMENTS

MINAL BHAGAT
Director, Ensonic Computech Pvt. Ltd.

EKIN is well-prepared to deliver enterprise-scale AI solutions in 2026, backed by in-house manufacturing, solution engineering, and strong execution across education, enterprise, and government sectors. We are already deploying AI-enabled smart classrooms, AI-powered interactive panels, PTZ cameras with auto-tracking and intelligent framing, and hybrid collaboration setups across institutions. The key adoption challenges are skill readiness and responsible AI usage, followed by infrastructure upgrades. We address these through consultative deployments, training support, and solution customization rather than one-size-fits-all approaches, ensuring AI adoption is practical, secure, and outcome-driven.

To mitigate risks such as deepfakes, cyber fraud, and data misuse, EKIN follows a secure-by-design approach. AI classrooms, video conferencing, and recording solutions incorporate encrypted communication, controlled access, and device-level security. For sensitive environments like government departments and universities, on-premise or hybrid AI architectures ensure data privacy, compliance, and ethical AI usage. Users are trained in responsible AI practices, reinforcing trust, accountability, and operational safety while safeguarding institutional and personal data.

Cloud-native and hybrid architectures form the backbone of EKIN's AI roadmap. Cloud platforms provide scalability, while hybrid models address data sovereignty and regulatory requirements. Hybrid smart classrooms, AI labs, and collaboration systems combine local processing with cloud intelligence, ensuring reliability, performance, and compliance. These initiatives align with Digital India and IndiaAI through Make-in-India manufacturing, indigenous product development, and large-scale digitization, supporting inclusive digital learning, AI skill development, and technology accessibility across urban and semi-urban India.

WE ARE POISED TO DELIVER SECURE, SCALABLE ENTERPRISE AI IN 2026

L ASHOK
MD, Futurenet Technologies (India) Pvt. Ltd.

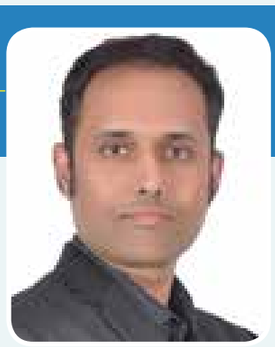
At Futurenet Technologies, we are fully prepared to provide enterprise-scale AI solutions in 2026, especially in infrastructure, whether in the cloud or on-premises. We will have a dedicated team to assist customers with infrastructure needs and are also adopting AI internally to improve operational efficiency. While infrastructure readiness is strong, the biggest challenges lie in security and compliance, which remain critical focus areas for both internal deployment and customer solutions.

At present, AI deployments are mostly customised solutions that continue to evolve. Many risk aspects, including deepfakes, cyber fraud, and data privacy, are primarily handled by customers. Futurenet Technologies ensures its AI offerings are designed to integrate with customer security protocols and governance frameworks, allowing clients to implement safeguards according to their specific requirements. This approach maintains flexibility while gradually embedding more security-conscious practices as solutions mature.

Cloud-native and hybrid architectures are central to Futurenet's AI roadmap. Stabilising AI products on a proven cloud-native infrastructure first enables a reliable base, which can then be extended into hybrid models to reduce cost per token and optimise performance. This strategy provides customers the best of both models, combining flexibility, controlled costs, and scalability. Futurenet's AI initiatives also align with Digital India and IndiaAI, supporting inclusive and accessible AI. Projects like the Bhasini translation app exemplify how AI can bridge cultural and linguistic diversity, enabling communities to connect seamlessly while promoting secure, responsible, and practical AI adoption.

SUCCESS IN 2026 WILL COME FROM SECURE, SCALABLE, AND RESPONSIBLE AI ADOPTION

YOGESH AWATE
Chief AI Officer (Business), Galaxy Office Automation Pvt. Ltd.



Galaxy's preparedness for enterprise-scale AI in 2026 reflects a strategic transition from experimentation to industrialization. AI is embedded as an enterprise intelligence layer within clients' platforms and decision systems rather than delivered as isolated models. Through a scalable AI factory operating model, we enable business-outcome driven intelligence by systematically combining predictive modelling with autonomous agentic systems. The key challenges in adoption include strategic and financial roadblocks, integration hurdles with legacy systems, security and governance concerns, organizational resistance, and data-related issues such as quality, bias, privacy, and availability.

To address risks like deepfakes, cyber fraud, and data privacy, we follow a "Zero-Trust AI" framework. Deepfakes are mitigated using C2PA cryptographic standards, frequency domain analysis, chromatic reflection analysis, and R-PPG pulse detection. Cyber fraud is countered via behavioral biometrics and agentic anomaly detection. Data privacy is ensured through federated learning, differential privacy, and compliance with the DPDP Act. Hybrid systems balance on-premises, cloud, and edge computing, enabling federated training, secure hybrid bursting, and sub-millisecond inference with data isolation.

Our AI solutions align with Digital India and IndiaAI initiatives by leveraging scalable infrastructure, India-centric multimodal foundation models, indigenous datasets from AIKosh and AI4Bharat, and open-source development. We focus on socio-economic impact through applications, bridge talent gaps in Tier-2/3 cities, support deep-tech startups, and adhere to Safe & Trusted AI guardrails. This holistic approach ensures enterprise AI adoption is secure, scalable, responsible, and aligned with India's national AI vision.

SCALING ENTERPRISE AI IN 2026 REQUIRES GOVERNANCE, NOT JUST INNOVATION

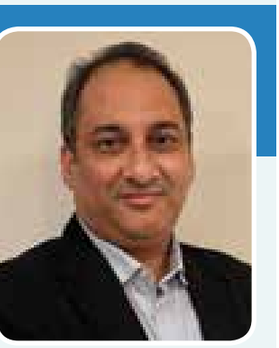
CHETAN JAIN
Co-Founder & MD, Inspira Enterprise

We believe we are well prepared to deliver enterprise-scale AI in 2026, having intentionally moved beyond experimentation and isolated pilots. Our focus has been on making AI deployable, secure, and governable at scale, treating it as a full lifecycle system covering data foundations, model development, deployment, and user interaction. The biggest challenge is not infrastructure, but skills and governance readiness. Many organisations want AI adoption but lack AI-aware security, risk, and compliance capabilities, with limited visibility into where AI is used, what data it consumes, how models behave over time, and who is accountable, creating exposure around data leakage, bias, misuse, and compliance. Our role as a VAR is to bridge innovation and enterprise-grade execution by embedding cybersecurity, data governance, and responsible AI principles into AI design and deployment.

When we deploy AI for customers, risks such as deepfakes, cyber fraud, and data privacy are addressed from day one. We first understand how and where AI is used, what data it touches, and how decisions are made, so safeguards are built early. We focus on strong identity controls, data validation, continuous monitoring, and privacy-by-design, supported by model governance and explainability to maintain visibility, accountability, and trust.

Cloud-native and hybrid architectures shape our AI roadmap, enabling speed, flexibility, and regulatory control, while aligning with Digital India and IndiaAI to support responsible, scalable, compliant enterprise adoption nationwide.

AI AT SCALE IN 2026 DEMANDS SKILLS DEPTH, SECURE ARCHITECTURES, AND GOVERNANCE CLARITY



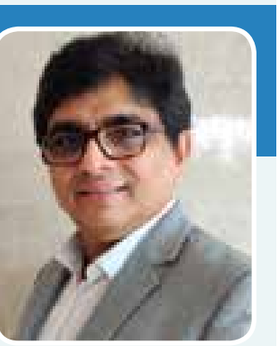
SAURABH DHOUNDIYAL
Group Business Manager - VAD, Iris Global Services Pvt. Ltd.

Iris Global is fully prepared to support enterprise-scale AI deployments in 2026 through a strong ecosystem of global OEM alliances, a nationwide channel partner network, and deep integration capabilities across data, cyber security, cloud, and infrastructure platforms. The biggest challenges to AI adoption remain skills readiness, data governance, compliance, and infrastructure modernization. We address these through certified training programs, reference architectures, pre-integrated AI stacks, and regulatory-aligned solution frameworks, enabling partners to confidently execute complex AI deployments across government, PSU, BFSI, manufacturing, and critical infrastructure sectors.

To mitigate risks such as deep fakes, cyber fraud, and data privacy, Iris Global leverages an advanced OEM portfolio that includes AI-driven deep fake detection, fraud analytics, identity security, endpoint protection, and data loss prevention solutions. All deployments follow privacy-by-design and zero-trust security frameworks, ensuring compliance with Indian data protection laws and sectoral regulations while maintaining enterprise-grade security and trust.

Cloud-native and hybrid architectures are central to Iris Global's AI roadmap, enabling secure on-premises, cloud, and hybrid AI environments that meet scalability, latency, and data sovereignty requirements. Our pre-validated platforms reduce deployment risks and improve speed and reliability in complex enterprise environments. Aligned with Digital India and India AI, we deliver secure, responsible, and scalable AI frameworks. AI is becoming critical for power generation, grid monitoring, energy forecasting, and asset lifecycle management, supported by our expanding portfolio of edge compute, intelligent power systems, cyber security, and monitoring platforms.

LDS INFOTECH POSITIONS TRUST, GOVERNANCE AT THE CORE OF AI READINESS



AMARNATH SHETTY
MD, LDS Infotech Pvt. Ltd.

At LDS Infotech, our readiness for enterprise-scale AI in 2026 is strong and execution-focused, particularly for regulated and hybrid environments. We are not pursuing generic AI deployments; instead, we are building enterprise AI capabilities anchored in cloud foundations, cybersecurity, data governance, and compliance-by-design. The biggest challenge to AI adoption is not infrastructure but data readiness and governance. Poor data quality, unclear ownership, and weak lifecycle controls directly undermine AI accuracy, trust, and regulatory acceptance. This is further compounded by shortages in practical AI skills across MLOps, AI security, and model governance, rising compliance expectations, and the complexity of hybrid environments where legacy, OT, and cloud-native platforms must coexist securely.

As AI adoption accelerates, risks such as deepfakes, cyber fraud, identity compromise, and data privacy violations become material business risks. Our approach is security-first and governance-led, embedding controls across the AI lifecycle through Zero Trust architectures for AI workloads, AI-aware threat detection, strong data governance aligned with India's DPDP framework, and explainable, auditable, policy-bound AI models. In enterprise and regulated environments, AI will scale only where trust, transparency, and compliance are engineered by design.

Cloud-native and hybrid architectures are foundational to our AI roadmap, enabling performance, compliance, and cost balance across environments. We design architectures that unify identity, security, governance, and lifecycle management, allowing AI to scale from pilots to enterprise deployments. This approach aligns closely with Digital India and IndiaAI, focusing on responsible AI, skilling, data sovereignty, and scalable adoption.

ENTERPRISE AI IN 2026 WILL BE DRIVEN BY STRONG FOUNDATIONS, NOT RUSHED EXPERIMENTATION

SAIRAMAN MUDALIAR
Co-Founder & Director, Pentagon System & Services Pvt. Ltd.

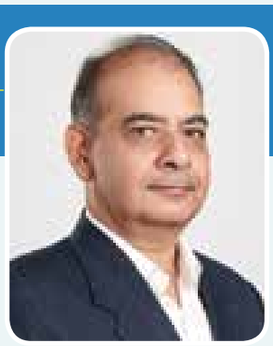
Pentagon has been preparing for enterprise-scale AI by strengthening the foundations required for scalable deployment, including modern infrastructure, hybrid cloud readiness, cybersecurity, and data visibility. We work closely with enterprises to ensure their compute, storage, networking, and observability layers are AI-ready before introducing advanced workloads. The biggest challenges we see are data readiness and security governance, as many organisations underestimate the complexity of managing data quality, regulatory compliance, and model lifecycle management. Our focus is on enabling secure, resilient platforms and guiding customers through phased adoption rather than rushed experimentation.

Security and governance are embedded into every AI engagement we deliver. We follow a zero-trust approach with strong identity controls, continuous monitoring, and data classification frameworks to mitigate risks such as deepfakes, cyber fraud, and misuse. For sensitive workloads, we design architectures that ensure data sovereignty and compliance with evolving regulations. We also educate customers on responsible AI usage, access controls, and auditability to minimise operational and reputational risks.

Hybrid and cloud-native architectures are central to our AI strategy. Enterprises need flexibility to run workloads across on-premises, private cloud, and public cloud environments while maintaining performance, security, and cost efficiency. Hybrid models support data locality, latency-sensitive processing, and regulatory alignment while leveraging cloud innovation. This approach aligns with Digital India and IndiaAI by enabling secure digital infrastructure, cloud adoption, and responsible AI deployment, contributing to India's long-term digital and AI maturity.

BUILDING TRUSTED ENTERPRISE-SCALE AI IN 2026 WITH SECURITY AND GOVERNANCE

KAMAL ZUTSHI
CTO, Progressive TechServe



Progressive is well prepared to deliver enterprise-scale AI in 2026. We anticipated AI's impact during the COVID period, when enterprises were rethinking scale and resilience, and launched the beta version of Workelevate, our Agentic AI- and NLP-driven platform for self-service and self-healing IT support. Workelevate went globally in 2022 and continues to evolve. Beyond it, AIOps is embedded across SOC, NOC, and managed services, enabling predictive detection, intelligent correlation, and automated remediation. While security and compliance are often cited as challenges, we have addressed these through ISO 9001:2015, ISO 27001:2022, SOC 2, and GDPR compliance. The primary challenge remains closing the AI skills gap to enable effective human–AI collaboration.

To manage risks like deepfakes, cyber fraud, and data privacy, we focus on building a Human Firewall. Regular training and phishing simulations help teams identify attacks that bypass traditional filters. Privacy is ensured through privacy-by-design architectures, DLP controls, secured environments, strict access policies, continuous monitoring, and leakage prevention, safeguarding data across AI, IT, and security workflows while maintaining compliance and trust.

Cloud-native and hybrid architectures underpin our AI roadmap. Cloud-native platforms deliver scale and real-time inference, while hybrid models allow clients in regulated sectors to retain sensitive data on-premise. Hosting Workelevate in India aligns with Digital India and IndiaAI, ensuring data sovereignty, compliance, and secure, scalable, automated digital operations for the nation's growing digital economy.

QUADRA IS READY TO DELIVER SCALABLE, SECURE AI IN INDIA BY 2026

PRASHANTH SUBRAMANIAN
Co-Founder & Director, Quadrasystems.net (India) Pvt. Ltd.

Quadra is prepared for 2026, built on a 25-year foundation in enterprise architecture, holding AWS Premier Partner status, and 20 consecutive years of Microsoft global recognition. Our dedicated Centers of Excellence focus on Applied AI and Generative AI frameworks to drive enterprise deployments. The primary challenge remains the skills gap, with India needing nearly one million AI professionals by 2026. Enterprises also face complex legacy estates, alongside growing requirements for DPDPA compliance and security resilience as AI adoption expands.

Emerging risks such as deepfakes, cyber fraud, and data privacy are addressed through a unified security fabric that replaces fragmented tools with cohesive defense platforms. Using the BluForge platform, Quadra integrates technologies from leading security vendors and open-source frameworks for real-time anomaly detection and incident response. For privacy, DPDPA-driven compliance is ensured through workshops, data discovery, and impact assessments, embedding security and privacy controls into cloud architecture from the start.

Hybrid architecture is the default approach for 2026. Cloud-native platforms provide scalability, while data gravity and sovereignty require critical workloads to remain close to the source. The roadmap focuses on AI Factories, where a thin control plane manages global policies and a thick data plane supports high-volume local processing. This ensures high-performance inference, reduced latency, and avoids vendor lock-in, while aligning with IndiaAI's pillars of Application Development and FutureSkills, supporting India's transition from AI consumer to global AI leader.

ENABLING THE INFRASTRUCTURE BACKBONE FOR ENTERPRISE-SCALE AI IN INDIA BY 2026

RAJESH GOENKA
CEO, Rashi Peripherals

As India moves into an AI-first era, Rashi Peripherals' readiness for enterprise-scale AI in 2026 lies in enabling the foundational infrastructure required at scale. The company focuses on ensuring timely availability of high-performance servers, GPUs, advanced storage, and networking that form the backbone of AI data centers. From an ecosystem and execution standpoint, Rashi Peripherals is well prepared, backed by long-standing OEM relationships, strong supply chain capabilities, and experience in large-scale deployments, including executing one of India's largest AI data center hardware orders in 2024.

The biggest challenges to AI adoption remain infrastructure-led rather than conceptual. Component shortages, storage constraints, shipment delays, and the need for reliable power, cooling, and network readiness continue to be key friction points at the data center level. To address risks while deploying AI infrastructure, Rashi Peripherals enables customers with enterprise-grade hardware that supports secure workloads, data integrity, and scalability, complemented by pre-sales solution design and techno-commercial assistance aligned with regulatory, data residency, and enterprise security requirements.

Cloud-native and hybrid architectures are central to AI deployments across India, with demand for hybrid models integrating on-premise workloads with cloud platforms. Rashi Peripherals supports this shift through cloud-ready hardware, high-speed networking, and scalable storage. Aligned with Digital India and IndiaAI, the company strengthens supply chains and last-mile availability to help enterprises build sovereign, AI-ready infrastructure at scale.

AI-INTEGRATED CYBERSECURITY IS A NATURAL PROGRESSION FOR SECURING DIGITAL INDIA IN 2026

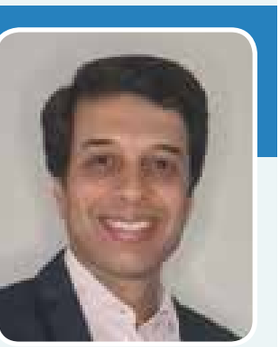
NK MEHTA
CEO & MD, Secure Network Solutions India Pvt. Ltd.

It has been a natural progression for SNS to deliver AI-integrated cybersecurity solutions, and we have been doing so for the past couple of years. Our team has undergone intensive training to design, deploy, manage, and deliver AI-integrated security solutions, and we continue to upskill as the technology evolves. The key challenges we see are security—fully trusting AI for threat detection and prevention—followed by skills, particularly AI-aware security professionals, compliance in explaining AI decisions to regulators and auditors, and finally infrastructure readiness.

To address risks such as deepfakes, cyber fraud, and data privacy, cybersecurity solutions integrated with AI are trained using techniques implemented by OEMs, commonly known as adversarial training, which strengthens AI models and minimises risk. In terms of data privacy, OEMs have implemented controls such as data minimisation, data anonymisation, on-premise deployments, data localisation, regulatory compliance, and certifications to demonstrate privacy safeguards. These measures collectively help reduce privacy concerns while deploying AI-driven security solutions for customers.

Cybersecurity design for cloud-native and hybrid architectures is shaped by scalability, privacy, multi-tenancy, continuously learning AI, and performance, requiring different approaches, skills, and deployment mechanisms. SNS continuously focuses on skill-building through an in-house learning management platform and dedicated teams for cloud security services. As Digital India accelerates digitisation across identity, payments, healthcare, education, and public services, AI-integrated cybersecurity becomes critical. SNS continues to safeguard such initiatives through strong OEM partnerships and in-house trained cybersecurity specialists.

DRIVING RESPONSIBLE, SCALABLE ENTERPRISE AI ADOPTION IN 2026



ANIRUDH SHROTRIYA
MD, Shro Systems Pvt. Ltd.

At Shro Systems, we are well prepared to deliver enterprise-scale AI in 2026, but we approach it pragmatically rather than chasing hype. Our readiness rests on two fundamentals: strong infrastructure foundations—including modern data centres, hybrid cloud, and AI-ready compute through partners like HPE—and a use-case–driven approach focused on measurable business outcomes. Leveraging our ISV ecosystem, we provide industry-specific solutions with platforms and LLMs built to work seamlessly with customers' data. The biggest challenges to AI adoption are skills, data readiness, and governance. While compute and cloud are increasingly accessible, organisations struggle with AI talent, operationalising models, and ensuring security, compliance, and responsible AI practices. Our aim is to bridge this gap—moving enterprises from pilots to production with confidence, trust, and measurable business impact.

Cloud-native and hybrid architectures are central to our AI roadmap and enterprise deployments. AI succeeds only when it runs close to data, meets latency and compliance requirements, and scales without disruption. Our hybrid-by-design approach combines cloud-native platforms for rapid innovation with on-prem and private cloud environments for performance, data sovereignty, and regulatory control. This ensures AI platforms remain flexible, portable, and secure while avoiding vendor lock-in.

Through deep partnerships across infrastructure, cloud, and cybersecurity, we help customers build AI systems that are governed, resilient, and scalable. By aligning enterprise AI execution with measurable outcomes, we ensure innovation translates into real business value while maintaining trust, compliance, and operational excellence across industries and use cases.

VARS MUST EVOLVE AS TRUSTED AI TRANSFORMATION PARTNERS IN 2026

DEBRAJ DAM
Co-Founder and Chief - VAD Venture, Supertron Electronics (SEPL)

We are fully prepared to deliver enterprise-scale AI solutions in 2026, having transitioned from traditional system integration to outcome-driven AI and data services. We have invested aggressively in upskilling across AI engineering, MLOps, cybersecurity, and cloud architecture, enabling us to design, deploy, and operationalise AI at scale. The primary challenges are not technology limitations but organisational readiness—specifically skills availability, data maturity, and governance frameworks. Security and compliance are no longer blockers; they are design principles embedded from day one.

We approach AI security with a zero-trust, security-by-design mindset across all deployments. Our solutions integrate robust identity controls, data lineage, encryption, and continuous monitoring to manage risk proactively. To counter emerging threats such as deepfakes, cyber fraud, data leakage, and model misuse, we combine AI-powered threat detection with strong human oversight, auditability, and accountability. Responsible AI is not optional; it is foundational to trust, regulatory confidence, and long-term enterprise adoption.

Cloud-native and hybrid architectures are central to our AI roadmap, balancing hyperscale cloud agility with regulatory control and data sovereignty. Our platform-agnostic strategy avoids vendor lock-in while enabling secure, scalable innovation across industries. This approach aligns closely with Digital India and IndiaAI, supporting digital public infrastructure, indigenous innovation, data localisation, and responsible AI adoption. In 2026, VARs must evolve into trusted AI transformation partners—and we have made that choice with clear accountability and measurable outcomes.

ENTERPRISE AI READINESS IN 2026 HINGES ON SKILLS, COMPLIANCE, AND SECURITY

VIJAYAKUMAR VAIDYANATHAN
COO, Symmetrix Computer Systems Pvt. Ltd.

Considering data foundation as a major pillar of AI, our readiness for enterprise-scale AI in 2026 is around 40 percent. Other pillars such as strategy and leadership, security, infrastructure, and skills or change management are closer to 20 percent. The biggest challenge is the availability of skilled manpower, and this gap is expected to persist due to high demand versus availability. Compliance is another key challenge for SMBs, as many operate with basic or intermediate IT security while large organisations mandate compliance for suppliers and partners, creating budget and resource constraints.

Security is the next major concern, as emerging risks will require organisations to invest additional effort and time to remain vigilant. To address risks such as deepfakes, cyber fraud, and data privacy, particularly in the SMB segment, we adopt hybrid systems balancing automation with human-in-the-loop processes. Media generated through workflows is manually verified before publishing, standard templates with watermarking are used to maintain authenticity, and teams are periodically trained on data security.

Audit trails are maintained and reviewed to strengthen data protection, supported by privacy-by-design and continuous monitoring to ensure compliance and tamper resistance. Cloud-native platforms are becoming the foundation of the current IT era, while SMBs largely operate in hybrid architectures focused on compliance, security, and on-premises integration. Our AI solutions align with Digital India and IndiaAI, emphasizing data security, India-specific compliance, and responsible AI usage frameworks.

AI SUCCESS IN 2026 WILL BE DRIVEN BY ADOPTION MINDSET, NOT JUST TECHNOLOGY

SURESH RAMANI
CEO, TECHGYAN

As India enters an AI-first era, the biggest challenge is not technology but mindset and adoption. Most SMBs still view AI as an IT implementation rather than a business transformation opportunity. At Techgyan, we have been all in on AI for over a year through workshops, blogs, podcasts, solution assessments, and a structured AI & Copilot Advisory Framework. Our deep internal adoption of Copilot, Agentic AI, and Microsoft Fabric gives us a practitioner's edge. We are prepared to deliver enterprise-scale AI through our core AI Framework, hands-on adoption workshops, and repeatable transformation playbooks. However, the real barriers are low business readiness for AI-driven process redesign, lack of structured adoption programs, poor data governance maturity, and limited focus on AI plus security.

AI cannot scale without AI-specific security. Techgyan has built a Baseline AI Security Checklist for SMBs centred on Microsoft Defender, Purview, and Entra. We focus on protection against AI-generated fraud and deepfakes, data governance and safe prompt engineering, identity-first security with strong access controls, and continuous monitoring of AI activity. AI misuse is the new cyber-attack surface, and we treat it as such.

Our approach is Hybrid by Design, combining Azure cloud-native AI, hybrid deployments for regulated or latency-sensitive workloads, Copilot extensibility, Agentic AI for business workflows, and Microsoft Fabric for unified data and analytics. This aligns with Digital India and IndiaAI by enabling responsible AI, skilling at scale, secure cloud adoption, and adoption-led business outcomes.

EXECUTION, NOT EXPERIMENTATION, WILL DEFINE ENTERPRISE AI READINESS IN 2026

PRASHANTH G J
CEO, TechnoBind Solutions

As we move into 2026, readiness for enterprise-scale AI is no longer about experimentation; it is about execution at scale. At TechnoBind, our preparedness is anchored in building deep capabilities across our partner ecosystem rather than treating AI as a standalone technology. We have invested significantly in enablement programs that help VARs move from reselling tools to delivering outcome-driven AI solutions across data, cloud, security, and applications. The biggest challenge is not infrastructure, as cloud maturity in India has improved rapidly, but gaps in skills and governance, especially operationalising responsible AI aligned with compliance.

AI-driven threats such as deepfakes, identity fraud, and data misuse are becoming more sophisticated, and addressing them requires a security-first approach to AI adoption. The focus is on helping partners embed security, privacy, and trust into AI deployments from day one through strong data governance, secure access controls, continuous monitoring, and AI-aware security frameworks. Equally important is educating customers on responsible AI usage, including model transparency, auditability, and compliance with evolving data protection norms, as trust will be a competitive differentiator in 2026.

Cloud-native and hybrid architectures are central to the AI roadmap as enterprises operate across on-premises systems, private clouds, and public clouds. Hybrid and multi-cloud models enable flexibility, data sovereignty, and performance optimisation for AI workloads. This approach supports portable, resilient AI solutions aligned with where data resides and aligns with Digital India and IndiaAI through localisation, skill development, and responsible adoption for India's digital economy sustainable.

UNIFIED DATA-TECH SOLUTIONS READIES SECURE, SCALABLE ENTERPRISE AI FOR 2026

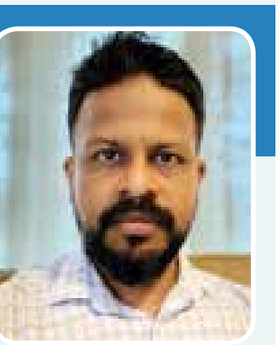
PRANAV PARIKH
CTO, Unified Data-Tech Solutions Ltd.

Unified Data-Tech Solutions is progressively capable of delivering enterprise-scale AI from pilots to production, thanks to our mature partnerships with major infrastructure and cloud providers. Access to GPU-accelerated compute, container platforms, cloud-native AI services, and zero-trust security platforms helps us deliver scalable compute, modernized data platforms, and secure production environments. While skills gaps, poor data foundations, and infrastructure remain significant barriers, embedding risk controls and security against data privacy threats and specialized attacks—such as manipulating inputs, model theft, and others—remains the top blocker for responsible and trustworthy AI deployments.

The rise of AI has introduced sophisticated threats, including deepfakes, AI-generated illegitimate business documents, and unauthorized model access and exfiltration. Traditional security measures alone are insufficient. Our partnerships with MSSPs and leading security vendors provide 24/7 threat monitoring, alerting, and rapid response, with integrated behavioral analysis and anomaly detection to mitigate AI-based fraud, automated impersonation, and contextual spoofing. Identity and Access Management, Multi-Factor Authentication, device-bound cryptographic passkeys, and Data Loss Prevention ensure only authorized developers and data scientists access sensitive AI environments, safeguarding confidential training data, including PII.

Cloud-native and hybrid architectures are both enablers and transformative in shaping our AI roadmap. Cloud-native environments enable rapid experimentation, elastic scaling, and dynamic GPU/TPU provisioning for model training and GenAI innovation, while hybrid setups retain sensitive data on-premises to meet regulatory obligations. Aligned with Digital India and IndiaAI initiatives, our solutions enhance secure digital interactions, offer passkey-based authentication, and add intelligent human-authenticity and fraud-detection layers, protecting regulated institutions from AI-driven threats while advancing scalable, indigenous AI technologies.

SKILLS, SECURITY, AND GOVERNANCE WILL SHAPE ENTERPRISE AI READINESS IN 2026



SHARATH NAYAK
Director, Viroka Technology Pvt. Ltd.

Viroka Technology is strategically positioned to deliver enterprise-scale AI by 2026 through a pragmatic and risk-aware adoption model. We see four primary challenges—skills availability, security, compliance, and infrastructure readiness. The immediate challenge is the skills gap, particularly in applied AI engineering and responsible AI deployment. To address this, we prioritise GenAI consumption, prompt engineering, model fine-tuning, and system integration rather than building large foundational models. Leveraging platforms such as IBM SkillsBuild and Microsoft Learn enables scalable, cost-effective AI expertise across roles, delivering faster time-to-value aligned with enterprise use cases.

Security and compliance are treated as first-order constraints. We follow strict security-by-design principles, ensuring sensitive data is never unnecessarily exposed. Secrets are stored in secure key vaults with least-privilege access, supported by continuous testing, runtime monitoring, and Zero Trust controls. Risks such as deepfakes, cyber fraud, and data privacy are mitigated through layered detection, AI-driven fraud analytics, DLP mechanisms, and privacy-by-design architectures with automated PII detection, masking, and lifecycle governance. Governance platforms provide centralised policy management, audit trails, and regulatory readiness.

Cloud-native and hybrid architectures are central to our AI roadmap. We follow a 'train in the cloud, deploy on-premises' model using elastic GPUs for training and containerised, Kubernetes-based inference for sensitive workloads. This ensures scalability, low latency, portability, and compliance. Aligned with Digital India and IndiaAI, we enable sovereign infrastructure, DPDP compliance, multilingual AI, and responsible adoption focused on trust, inclusion, and sustainable innovation.

SECURITY AND SKILLS WILL DEFINE ENTERPRISE-SCALE AI READINESS IN 2026

RAJESH MATHKAR
Director, Wysetek Systems Technologists Pvt. Ltd.

Wysetek is highly prepared to deliver enterprise-scale AI through its Next-Gen Cyber Defense Centre (CDC), which already leverages AI and Machine Learning engines within SIEM and SOAR platforms for real-time threat detection and automated response. While infrastructure scalability is addressed through hybrid cloud models, the primary challenges remain security and skills. The growing cybersecurity skills shortage, combined with increasingly sophisticated and state-sponsored cyberattacks, creates a perfect storm that demands deep domain expertise, which Wysetek addresses through its team of over 250 certified professionals.

Advanced risks such as deepfakes and cyber fraud are mitigated through a multi-layered defense strategy, including Brand Protection and Deep and Dark Web Monitoring to detect impersonation and credential leaks before exploitation. Data privacy is safeguarded through strong Data Governance, Encryption, and Tokenization frameworks, along with adherence to international standards such as ISO 27001:2022 and SOC 2 Type II, ensuring security and compliance across the AI deployment lifecycle.

Cloud-native and hybrid architectures are central to Wysetek's roadmap, with the CDC designed as an Inverted Cognitive SOC integrating data from enterprise systems, private clouds, and public cloud workloads including AWS, Azure, and Google Cloud. This hybrid approach provides flexible, scalable security with single-pane-of-glass visibility and consistent policy enforcement. Aligned with Digital India and IndiaAI, Wysetek supports India-scale cybersecurity resilience through presence in over 50 locations, sector-specific use cases for banking, and compliance with regulators such as RBI and SEBI, enabling a secure foundation for India's AI-driven digital transformation.

India-EU FTA: How the 'Mother of All Deals' Could Rewire India's Electronics and Tech Manufacturing Future

FROM ASSEMBLY LINES TO INNOVATION LABS: TRADE AGREEMENT PROMISES DUTY-FREE ACCESS, SLASHED COMPONENT COSTS, AND A STRUCTURAL RESET FOR INDIAN ELECTRONICS—BUT EXECUTION WILL DETERMINE IF THE $50 BILLION EXPORT DREAM BECOMES REALITY

The recent India-European Union Free Trade Agreement has Prime Minister Narendra Modi calling it a "turning point" in bilateral relations. Industry leaders went further, dubbing it the "mother of all deals." For India's technology sector—particularly electronics manufacturing—the hyperbole may be warranted. With bilateral trade already at $136 billion and duty-free access proposed for over 93 percent of Indian goods, the agreement represents more than incremental trade facilitation. It's a potential structural reset that could finally propel India from its current role as an assembly hub into a global design and manufacturing powerhouse.

The opportunity is enormous: a $750 billion European market opening up with zero-duty access, mutual certifications fast-tracking compliance, and tariff cuts on critical components that currently face import duties exceeding 40 percent. Industry projections suggest electronics exports could scale from $18 billion to $50 billion by 2031, spanning LEDs, appliances, IT hardware, semiconductors, and IoT devices. But beneath the optimism lies a more complex reality—one that demands domestic capability building, infrastructure investment, and policy consistency to translate paper commitments into tangible gains.

THE INPUT COST REVOLUTION: ADDRESSING MANUFACTURING'S HIDDEN BOTTLENECK

While much attention focuses on export opportunities, industry leaders emphasize that the FTA's most transformative impact may come from the supply side. Indian electronics manufacturers have long struggled with a fundamental cost disadvantage: 35-40 percent of production costs stem from imported high-value components, precision testing equipment, and advanced machinery—much of it sourced from Europe and currently facing tariffs of 40 percent or higher.

"The underappreciated input-side shift is massive," explains Pankaj Rana, CEO of Hisense India. "Precision components, testing gear, lithography tools currently face 40 percent-plus import duties from European suppliers, now dropping significantly, enabling unprecedented cost reductions while elevating quality via mutual certifications and faster EU compliance."

This tariff rationalization addresses what Rajeev Singh, Managing Director of BenQ India and South Asia, calls "one of the sector's long-standing challenges: the cost and complexity of sourcing high-quality components and technologies critical for innovation-led products." For manufacturers producing displays, professional AV systems, medical imaging equipment, and smart classroom solutions, access to European precision engineering at competitive prices could fundamentally alter their cost structures and competitive positioning.

Murali Mantravadi, Joint Managing Director of Energy Bots, frames it as an "input-side revolution" that directly tackles manufacturing bottlenecks. "This dual engine of cheaper European supply chains and higher export realizations creates unprecedented scale," he notes, projecting 3-5x growth for companies building sophisticated IoT devices and sustainable technology solutions.

The implications extend beyond simple cost reduction. European components often come with stringent quality certifications and sustainability credentials that align with global market expectations. As Indian manufacturers integrate these inputs, their products automatically gain credibility in international markets—a soft power benefit that's difficult to quantify but invaluable for market entry.

FROM ASSEMBLY TO INNOVATION: MOVING UP THE VALUE CHAIN

India's electronics sector has achieved remarkable growth over the past decade, but largely through assembly and contract manufacturing. The country has excelled at putting together smartphones, televisions, and consumer electronics—yet the high-value activities of design, R&D, and intellectual property creation have remained largely offshore. The India-EU FTA creates conditions that could finally shift this equation.

"The FTA can accelerate India's transition from being primarily an assembly-led market to becoming a design, innovation, and value-added manufacturing hub," Singh emphasizes. "Europe brings deep expertise in precision engineering, sustainability standards, and R&D-driven product development. Easier collaboration in these areas can help Indian operations move up the value chain."

This isn't merely aspirational. The agreement facilitates technical collaborations, joint R&D initiatives, and knowledge transfer in areas where Europe maintains technological leadership: advanced semiconductors, automotive electronics, industrial automation, and green technology. For Indian companies willing to invest in capabilities rather than just capacity, the FTA provides a framework for genuine technology partnerships.

Aditya Khemka, Managing Director of CP PLUS, highlights how the agreement enables "collaboration on standards, certification, and R&D. Stronger testing and standard formation will lift product quality and global trust, while faster time-to-market benefits manufacturers and customers alike."

The standardization dimension deserves particular attention. Indian manufacturers have often struggled with fragmented standards across different export markets, requiring multiple certifications and compliance regimes. Alignment with European technical standards provides a single framework that's recognized globally, reducing time-to-market and certification costs while building institutional capabilities in quality management.

THE EXPORT OPPORTUNITY: A $50 BILLION TARGET

The numbers tell a compelling story. Industry projections suggest Indian electronics exports to the EU could grow from approximately $18 billion currently to $50 billion by 2031—a nearly threefold increase driven by duty-free access and improved competitiveness. This growth spans multiple categories: LED lighting, home appliances, IT hardware, semiconductors, automotive

electronics, and increasingly, sophisticated IoT and smart devices.

For a country that has long aspired to become a global electronics manufacturing hub, this represents validation. European OEMs are already exploring "Make in India" partnerships to serve global markets, attracted by improving quality standards, competitive costs, and now, favorable trade terms. The agreement positions India as an alternative manufacturing base for companies seeking to diversify supply chains away from over-concentration in East Asia.

Ravi Agarwal, Co-founder and Managing Director of Cellecor, views this as "encouragement to invest deeper in manufacturing, strengthen quality and compliance standards, and build consumer technology that is rooted in Indian households while being globally competitive and future ready."

The sustainability dimension adds another layer of opportunity. European markets increasingly demand products that meet stringent environmental and social governance criteria. India's growing capabilities in renewable energy, electric vehicles, and green technology align well with these expectations. Companies like Energy Bots, building smart water management devices with sustainable IoT, see the FTA as enabling them to "penetrate EU homes, industries, and green infrastructure markets" with solutions addressing Europe's net-zero ambitions.

"This isn't just export growth to $50 billion by 2031," Mantravadi argues. "It's a structural reset enabling 'Made in India' electronics to compete globally on cost, quality, and sustainability—finally delivering the 'from India to the world' promise while aligning with Europe's net-zero demands."

Beyond Manufacturing: Digital Infrastructure and Services

While electronics manufacturing dominates discussions, the FTA's implications extend into digital infrastructure and technology services. Sunil Bharti Mittal, Founder and Chairman of Bharti Enterprises, emphasizes opportunities in "digital infrastructure, space connectivity, and secure networks, offering European investors a compelling opportunity to innovate and scale with India for global markets."

This bidirectional potential—Indian companies investing in European digital infrastructure while European firms scale operations in India—reflects the agreement's broader strategic dimension. In an era of technological decoupling and supply chain reconfiguration, the India-EU partnership represents an alternative model based on democratic values, rule of law, and market economics.

"In a changing global economic order, the agreement sends a powerful signal of trust, stability, and long-term partnership," Mittal notes. For technology companies navigating geopolitical complexity, this institutional framework provides predictability and confidence for long-term investments.

THE IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGE: TURNING PROMISE INTO PERFORMANCE

Despite the compelling opportunity, industry leaders strike notes of caution about execution. Trade agreements create enabling conditions; they don't automatically deliver results. India's track record on FTA utilization has been mixed, with businesses often failing to leverage available benefits due to complexity, documentation requirements, or simple lack of awareness.

Singh emphasizes that "to fully unlock these benefits, the agreement must be complemented by domestic readiness. This includes skill development in advanced manufacturing, faster regulatory clearances, and consistent policy support for high-value electronics production."

The skills gap represents a particular challenge. Moving from assembly to design and innovation requires engineers, technicians, and managers with different capabilities—expertise in R&D, intellectual property management, advanced manufacturing processes, and global quality standards. India's education system is producing large numbers of graduates, but not always with the specialized skills that high-value electronics manufacturing demands.

MSMEs face additional hurdles. While large corporations can navigate complex certification processes and invest in compliance infrastructure, smaller manufacturers often lack resources and expertise. "MSMEs, in particular, will need support to integrate into EU-aligned supply chains," Singh notes, highlighting the need for government facilitation, industry associations, and capacity-building programs.

Infrastructure remains another constraint. Electronics manufacturing requires reliable power, efficient logistics, and supportive ecosystems of component suppliers and service providers. While India has made progress through initiatives like Electronics Manufacturing Clusters, gaps persist—particularly in tier-2 and tier-3 cities where much of the expansion is expected.

Regulatory predictability matters enormously for long-term investment decisions. Technology companies plan in multi-year horizons; they need confidence that today's incentives and policies will remain stable tomorrow. India's occasional policy reversals and bureaucratic complexity create hesitation among investors who might otherwise commit capital and technology.

STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS: RESHAPING GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS

Beyond bilateral trade, the India-EU FTA carries broader strategic significance for global technology supply chains. Both partners seek to reduce dependency on single-country manufacturing concentrations while building resilient, values-aligned partnerships. For India, this represents validation of its "trusted partner" positioning in an increasingly fragmented global economy.

Khemka frames it as "a timely step toward building a more balanced and resilient technology ecosystem. Deeper trade and technology exchange with the EU can help this corridor move away from over-reliance on limited geographies and toward a diversified, innovation-led supply chain."

European companies gain access to a massive domestic market—India's 1.4 billion consumers with rapidly growing purchasing power—while securing alternative manufacturing capacity. Indian companies gain technology, standards, and market access that accelerate their global competitiveness. The mutuality creates foundations for sustained partnership rather than extractive trade relationships.

This aligns with broader trends in global trade: the shift from pure efficiency optimization toward resilience and values alignment. In sectors like semiconductors, telecommunications equipment, and critical infrastructure, governments increasingly prioritize trusted partners over lowest-cost suppliers. The India-EU FTA positions both parties favorably in this reconfigured landscape.

THE ROAD AHEAD: EXECUTION WILL DETERMINE OUTCOMES

As implementation begins, several factors will determine whether the FTA delivers on its promise. First, businesses must actively leverage available benefits rather than waiting for automatic gains. This requires investment in understanding rules of origin, certification requirements, and compliance frameworks—areas where industry associations and government agencies must provide support.

Second, India must accelerate complementary reforms: skill development programs aligned with industry needs, infrastructure investments in manufacturing clusters, streamlined regulatory processes, and consistent policy signaling. The FTA creates opportunity; domestic capability determines whether India can capture it.

Third, both sides must maintain political commitment through implementation challenges. Trade agreements inevitably create winners and losers; managing domestic constituencies while preserving overall momentum requires sustained leadership.

Finally, businesses must think beyond immediate cost arbitrage toward long-term capability building. The real prize isn't cheap exports but transformation into a genuine innovation hub—one that not only manufactures products but conceives, designs, and owns the intellectual property behind them.

"Overall, the India–EU FTA is less about short-term trade gains and more about long-term capability building," Singh concludes. "If executed thoughtfully, it can position India as a trusted global partner in high-quality, sustainable electronics manufacturing."

The "mother of all deals" offers India's technology sector a generational opportunity. Whether it becomes a watershed moment or merely another unrealized potential depends entirely on execution. The pieces are in place; now comes the hard work of making it real.

ViewSonic Elevates Muneer Ahmad as Managing Director

ViewSonic Corp. has elevated Muneer Ahmad as Managing Director following five consecutive years of leadership in India's Interactive Flat Panel segment. Ahmad has been associated with ViewSonic for over eight years, playing a key role in expanding its presence across education, enterprise, and large-format commercial display markets.

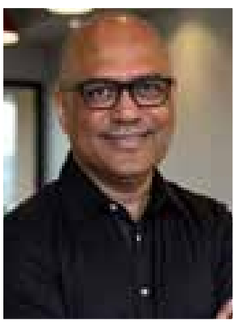
Under his leadership, ViewSonic retained the number one position in the IFP category for five years and entered the Direct LED display market. The expansion enables large-scale deployments across auditoriums, command centres, experience centres, and corporate boardrooms, supporting integrated, solution-led visual environments. Commenting on the elevation, Ahmad said ViewSonic will focus on customer-centric solutions, partner collaboration, and LED-led growth. As Managing Director, he will oversee India strategy, talent development, and ecosystem strengthening to support sustained expansion across education, enterprise collaboration, and commercial visualization nationwide over coming years ahead.

Data Safeguard India Names Tirthankar Mitra as CRO

Data Safeguard India has appointed Tirthankar Mitra as Chief Revenue Officer. He will lead sales, marketing, business development, and strategic partnerships across India, the Middle East, and other regulated markets, strengthening the company's go-to-market strategy amid rising demand for enterprise privacy solutions.

The appointment comes as India's Digital Personal Data Protection Act enters enforcement, pushing privacy, consent governance, and automation to board-level focus. Aligned with Make in India goals, Data Safeguard's ID-PRIVACY Unified Privacy Automation platform uses its AI/ML-based CCE engine to deliver scalable, privacy-by-design compliance.

Mitra brings over three decades of leadership across data privacy, cybersecurity, AI governance, and cloud platforms worldwide. Management said his experience in regulated sectors will accelerate growth. Mitra said the DPDP Act marks a shift toward accountability, positioning the company to operationalize trusted privacy governance at scale.



Tata Communications Names Ganesh Lakshminarayanan as CEO-Designate

Tata Communications has appointed Ganesh Lakshminarayanan as CEO-designate, signalling a key leadership transition at the global digital infrastructure company. He will work with the current leadership team before formally taking over as MD and CEO, subject to regulatory and shareholder approvals.

Lakshminarayanan will succeed Amur S Lakshminarayanan, who led the company through a major transformation focused on strengthening its digital portfolio and global enterprise services. With over three decades of experience, he currently serves as CEO of TCS China and has held senior roles across the Tata Group.

The company said the appointment underscores its focus on leadership continuity and long-term growth. As demand rises for secure, scalable digital infrastructure, Lakshminarayanan's global operating experience is expected to support Tata Communications' next phase of expansion.

HCLTech Elevates Sandeep Saxena as Chief Growth Officer for Key Markets

HCLTech has elevated company veteran Sandeep Saxena as Chief Growth Officer – Growth Markets 2, tasking him with driving growth across India and other priority markets, including the Middle East and Africa. Based in Mumbai, Saxena will report to C Vijayakumar, CEO and Managing Director of HCLTech.

The appointment aligns with HCLTech's strategy to sharpen its focus on India. Vijayakumar said the country, among the world's fastest-growing economies, offers significant opportunity, and HCLTech will deploy its global scale, deep expertise and full-stack capabilities to accelerate enterprise adoption of next-generation technologies while supporting the Government of India's Viksit Bharat and Digital India initiatives. Saxena said he is honoured to lead the growth agenda with a focus on innovative, future-ready solutions delivering measurable impact. A HCLTech veteran since 1998, he has led roles and scaled European businesses.

Forcepoint Appoints Archie Jackson as APAC Data Security Strategist

Forcepoint has appointed Archie Jackson as Data Security Strategist, Customer Success for Asia Pacific (APAC), strengthening its focus on customer-centric data security in an AI-driven era. In this role, Jackson will work closely with customers, partners, and internal teams to help organizations gain clearer visibility into sensitive data, adapt to evolving risks, and protect data across cloud, AI, and distributed environments.

Jackson brings over 20 years of leadership experience across cybersecurity, enterprise IT, cloud transformation, and infrastructure. A respected voice among CIOs and CISOs in India and across APAC, he is a recipient of multiple honors including CIO100 Hall of Fame and CSO100 awards. At Forcepoint, he will help translate security strategy into practical outcomes, guide adoption of AI-native capabilities, improve deployment stability, and provide regional insights to product teams—reinforcing Forcepoint's long-term commitment to customer success in APAC.

Denave Appoints Subir Mahapatra as President – Global Strategy, Sales & Marketing

Denave has appointed Subir Mahapatra as President – Global Strategy, Sales and Marketing, marking a key milestone in strengthening its global go-to-market execution and revenue transformation focus. The appointment comes as Denave sharpens its positioning as an outcome-driven growth partner for enterprises worldwide.

Subir brings over 25 years of leadership experience across IT, mobility, eCommerce, cloud, and staffing services, with proven expertise in scaling global sales organizations and leading complex enterprise engagements. Prior to Denave, he played a pivotal role at First Meridian Global Services, driving large multi-market programs as Senior Vice President – Strategic Businesses. He has also held senior leadership roles at Ingram Micro, AMD, and HCL, managing multi-country operations and large P&Ls across India and Bangladesh. At Denave, Subir will focus on strengthening global strategy, sales, and marketing, deepening customer and partner relationships, and accelerating AI-led, insight-driven revenue growth across international markets.

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Reg. No: DL-SW-01/4030/24-26
Posted at LPC Delhi RMS Delhi - 110006

Date of Posting 20 & 21
Date of Publishing / Printing: 18 & 19