

SMECHANNELS

India's leading IT magazine for channel business

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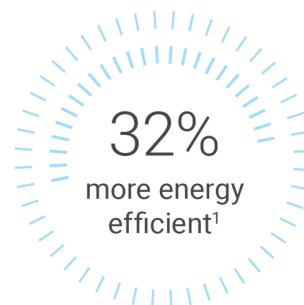
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EDITORIAL

US-IRAN WAR – IS A LONG-TERM SUPPLY CHAIN DISRUPTION IN THE OFFING?

MANASH RANJAN DEBATA
manash@accentinformedia.com



The escalating confrontation between the United States and Iran is not merely another geopolitical flashpoint in the Middle East. It carries the potential to trigger one of the most serious supply-chain disruptions since the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war. If the conflict persists, the world may be staring at a prolonged logistics and energy shock with ripple effects across manufacturing, trade, and inflation.

The epicentre of the crisis lies in the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow maritime corridor connecting the Persian Gulf to global markets. Nearly 20–30% of the world's seaborne crude oil trade and a large share of LNG shipments pass through this chokepoint, making it one of the most strategically important routes in global commerce. Any disruption here instantly reverberates through energy markets and supply chains.

Early signs of disruption are already visible. Tanker movements through the strait have slowed dramatically amid security risks and surging insurance premiums, while several regional oil facilities have reduced operations due to attacks and logistical bottlenecks. Some reports indicate that only a fraction of normal tanker traffic is currently able to pass through the corridor, tightening global oil supplies and pushing prices sharply higher.

However, the potential supply shock goes far beyond crude oil. Middle Eastern energy exports underpin vast downstream industries — petrochemicals, fertilisers, plastics, and industrial feedstocks. If shipments remain constrained, shortages could cascade into agriculture, manufacturing, and consumer goods markets worldwide. In other words, the war could trigger a multi-sector supply shock, not just an energy crisis.

Shipping logistics are also under pressure. Global carriers have begun rerouting vessels away from high-risk zones, sometimes sending them around the Cape of Good Hope, adding thousands of nautical miles and up to two weeks of transit time. These diversions raise freight rates, reduce fleet availability, and disrupt the delicate “just-in-time” inventory systems on which modern global trade depends.

For Asia — particularly India, China, Japan, and South Korea — the stakes are even higher. Roughly 80% of oil shipments through Hormuz head to Asian markets, meaning any prolonged disruption would hit the region's energy security and industrial production hardest.

The larger danger is that a prolonged conflict could push the global economy toward stagflation: rising energy prices combined with slowing economic growth. History offers warnings. The oil shocks of the 1970s reshaped global trade and inflation dynamics for years. **SME**

MY EXPERIENCE

Sightful Spacetop GI AR Laptop

The Sightful Spacetop AR Laptop represents a bold leap into the future of computing by replacing the traditional laptop display with augmented reality glasses. Designed by the innovative startup Sightful, the Spacetop brings spatial computing to everyday productivity. Instead of a physical screen, users wear lightweight AR glasses that project a massive virtual workspace, creating the experience of working on a large multi-monitor setup anywhere—from a coffee shop to an airplane seat.

SPECIAL FEATURE : AUGMENTED REALITY WORKSPACE, 100-INCH VIRTUAL MULTI-SCREEN DISPLAY, LIGHTWEIGHT AR GLASSES WITH DUAL OLED PANELS, SNAP-DRAGON PROCESSOR PERFORMANCE, SPACEOS SPATIAL INTERFACE, BUILT-IN SPEAKERS AND MICROPHONE



FINAL WORD:

The Sightful Spacetop AR Laptop introduces a radical new way to work by combining traditional laptop functionality with immersive augmented reality. Its ability to project a large, private virtual workspace makes it ideal for professionals who value portability without sacrificing screen real estate. As spatial computing evolves, devices like this may redefine how we interact with computers in the years ahead.

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CODE, COURAGE AND CHANGE: THE RISE OF WOMEN IN IT /25

As the world celebrates International Women's Day, the remarkable journey of women in the tech sector stands as a saga of talent, tenacity and transformation. From breaking glass ceilings to building the technologies of tomorrow, women leaders are reshaping the global IT industry—overcoming barriers, inspiring the next generation, and redefining what leadership in technology looks like.

AI



INTELLECT DESIGN ARENA / 30

"Intellect Announces Purple Fabric, its unique Judgment-Centric Open Business Impact AI Platform, to be available as "Enterprise AI on Tap""

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Publisher: Sanjib Mohapatra
Group Editor: Sanjay Mohapatra
Editor: Manash Ranjan Debata
Designer: Deepak kumar
Web Designer: Sangeet Kumar
Technical Writer: Manas Ranjan
Lead Visualizer: DPR Choudhary

MARKETING

Marketing Manager: Sangram R. Barpanda
Events Marketing: Vipin Negi
Circulation and Printing: Rajkumar Hansa

SALES CONTACTS

Delhi 6/102, Kaushalya Park, Hauz Khas
New Delhi-110016
Phone: 91-11-41055458 / 8587835685
sanjeev@smechannels.com

Bangalore

#28/1, 3rd Floor, Sri Lakshmi Krupa, Near
Shamanna Park, Model House Street,
Basavanagudi, Bangalore - 560004
Ph. No. +91 88618 21044

Mumbai

Tahmeed Ansari
2, Ground Floor, Park Paradise, Kay-Bees CHS.
Ltd., Opp. Green Park, Oshiwara, Andheri (west),
Mumbai - 400 053.
Ph. +91 22 26338546, Fax +91 22 26395581
Mobile: +91 9967 232424
E-mail: Info@smechannels.com

Kolkata

S Subhendu
BC-286, Laxmi Apartment, Kestopur
Kolkata-700101
Phone: 9674804389

EDITORIAL OFFICE

Delhi: 6/103, (GF) Kaushalya Park, New Delhi-
110016, Phone: 91-11-40587445
info@smechannels.com

Bangalore

#28/1, 3rd Floor, Sri Lakshmi Krupa, Near
Shamanna Park, Model House Street,
Basavanagudi, Bangalore - 560004
Ph. No. +91 88618 21044 E-Mail info@
accentinfomedia.com

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SECURONIX ELEVATES AJAY BIYANI TO SR. VP - APJ



Securonix, Inc., has promoted Ajay Biyani to the position of Senior Vice President, Asia Pacific and Japan (APJ). In this expanded role, Ajay will lead regional strategy, go-to-market execution, partner ecosystem development, and customer success initiatives across the region.

Since joining Securonix, Ajay has played a key role in scaling the company's footprint across APJ through disciplined expansion, partner enablement, and strong customer engagement. He built and led cross-functional teams across sales, channels, and customer success, supporting more than 100 professionals across the region. Under his leadership, Securonix delivered sustained year-over-year revenue growth while expanding adoption of its Unified Defense SIEM platform across financial services, telecommunications, government, and other regulated

industries.

Ajay also strengthened the regional MSSP and channel ecosystem, with strategic partnerships contributing significantly to pipeline growth and accelerating SaaS adoption across enterprise accounts.

With more than two decades of leadership experience spanning engineering, enterprise sales, and regional management, Ajay has held senior positions at ForgeRock, Verizon Enterprise Solutions, and Wipro Technologies. He has served as Vice President, APJ at Securonix since October 2022.

In his new role, Ajay will focus on helping organizations adopt governed, AI-powered security operations that deliver operational clarity, predictable economics, and executive-level accountability.

Ajay's promotion reflects Securonix's long-term investment in APJ.

AI Is Driving Rapid Container Adoption: Nutanix Enterprise Cloud Index survey

Nutanix, a leading provider of hybrid multicloud computing solutions, today announced the findings of its eighth annual Enterprise Cloud Index (ECI) survey and research report, which measures enterprise progress with cloud adoption. This year's report examined the challenges IT executives face as

they navigate rapid AI adoption alongside application and infrastructure modernisation.

The rapid rise of AI adoption in the enterprise over the last year is forcing a wave of infrastructure modernisation, as companies race to build and run applications more efficiently. In fact, containers have become a

core component of the enterprise application strategy, with the survey showing that 87% of respondents globally report AI is accelerating their adoption of containers to improve speed, reliability, and scalability.

"The findings indicate organisations need enterprise-grade security, resilience, and

portability as AI workloads can run anywhere," said Lee Caswell, SVP, Product and Solutions Marketing at Nutanix. "Organisations would also benefit from a common operating environment for virtual machines and containers that enables IT leaders to scale AI confidently across hybrid environments."

99% of Indian Enterprises Plan to Increase AI Investments

Enterprises across Asia Pacific are accelerating their shift from AI experimentation to execution, with 96% of organizations planning to increase AI investments over the next 12 months, according to the 4th edition of the Lenovo CIO Playbook 2026 - The Race for Enterprise AI, commissioned by Lenovo with insights from IDC. On average, organizations expect AI spending to grow by 15%, spanning GenAI and Agentic AI, public cloud AI services, on-prem AI infrastructure, and AI security tools.

India stands out in AP, with 99% of organizations planning to increase AI investments over the next 12 months and the highest average year-on-year budget growth in the region at 19%. These investments prioritize deploying and supporting AI infrastructure, internal AI training including non-IT staff, and generative AI development and applications, followed by AI devices and AI security, trust and transparency tools - underscoring AI as a core enabler of enterprise efficiency, resilience, and growth.

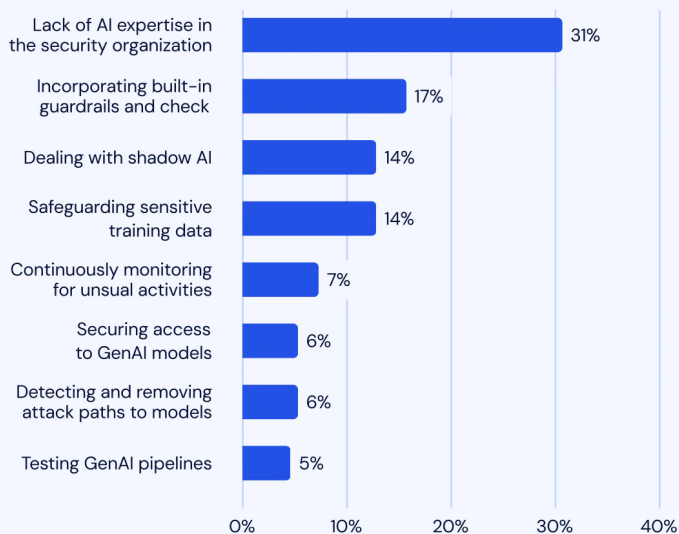
Lenovo Tech World'26 India Signals India's AI Powered Future

Lenovo, the global technology powerhouse, concluded the India edition of its annual flagship innovation event, Tech World'26, today, at JW Marriott, New Delhi. It brought together industry leaders, partners, customers, and creators for a two-day immersive showcase of how AI is moving from concept to tangible impact.

A defining highlight of Lenovo Tech World'26 India was the India debut of Qira – A New Personal Ambient Intelligence System that unifies context, memory, and continuity across Lenovo and Motorola devices, enabling a single ambient AI super-agent that evolves with the user, making AI more intuitive, adaptive, and relevant to everyday workflows. Lenovo also unveiled its Think Systems and Think Edge latest inferencing servers that are purpose built for every inferencing workload and vertical with advanced memory, networking & 5x GPU performance. Through live demonstrations and AI-driven proofs of concept, Lenovo showcased how Personal AI and Enterprise AI can help turn insights into action. A broad portfolio of enterprise offerings, highlighted by Lenovo's Hybrid AI Advantage, showcased how Lenovo's solutions enable organizations with tailored AI outcomes optimized to meet specific business needs.

TOP AI SECURITY CHALLENGE IN ORGANISATIONS WORLDWIDE

WHAT IS THE TOP AI SECURITY CHALLENGE IN YOUR ORGANIZATION



Source: Wiz AI Security Readiness Report

EXECUTIVE MOVEMENT



COMMVAULT APPOINTS NITHYA CADAMBI AS GM -- GLOBAL CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE



ALTIMETRIK APPOINTS DHIRENDRA NATH AS CHRO TO STRENGTHEN CULTURE, LEADERSHIP CONTINUITY, AND PEOPLE PRACTICES



DASSAULT SYSTÈMES APPOINTS BIJURAJ BALAKRISHNAN AS CEO, GLOBAL SERVICES FOR DASSAULT SYSTÈMES IN INDIA



PRACTO APPOINTS VP OF AI TO DEEPEN OUTCOME-FOCUSED HEALTHCARE

Save more than just footage

Fewer drives
Fewer upgrades
Fewer hassles

A single 4TB drive gives you the capacity of two 2TB units — saving you power, space, and time.

Big capacity, small footprint.
That's smart saving.



Upgrade
smart.
Upgrade to
4TB.

Akamai Launches AI Grid Intelligent Orchestration for Distributed Inference

Akamai Technologies has reached a major milestone in the evolution of artificial intelligence, unveiling the first global-scale implementation of NVIDIA AI Grid reference design. By integrating NVIDIA AI infrastructure into Akamai's infrastructure, and leveraging intelligent workload orchestration across its network, Akamai intends to move the industry beyond isolated AI factories toward a unified, distributed grid for AI inference. The move marks a significant step in the evolution of Akamai's Inference Cloud, introduced late last year. As the first to operationalize the AI Grid, Akamai is rolling out thousands of NVIDIA RTX PRO 6000 Blackwell Server Edition GPUs, providing a platform to enable enterprises to run agentic and physical AI with the responsiveness of local compute and the scale of the global web.

"AI factories have been purpose-built for training and frontier model workloads — and centralized infrastructure will continue to deliver the best tokenomics for those use cases," said Adam Karon, Chief Operating Officer and General Manager, Cloud Technology Group, Akamai.

ATEN Participates at Automation India South 2026

ATEN Advance, a leading provider of KVM, AV/IT connectivity, and management solutions, will participate in Automation India South 2026, scheduled to take place from March 12 to 14, 2026, at the Chennai Trade Center. Visitors can experience ATEN's latest innovations at Booth No: C-40.

At the expo, ATEN will demonstrate cutting-edge solutions designed to meet the evolving needs of control rooms, industrial automation environments, enterprise IT operations, and mission-critical applications. One of the main attractions at ATEN's booth will be the VW1608 Video Wall Processor, a powerful and flexible solution designed for modern control room environments. The VW1608 enables seamless management of multiple video sources and displays, delivering high-resolution visuals with real-time performance. It is ideal for applications such as monitoring centers, smart factories, transportation hubs, and security operations where situational awareness is critical.

ATEN will also showcase the KE8980MR KVM Extender, engineered to deliver high-performance remote access with low latency and uncompromised video quality. This solution allows operators to control systems securely from remote locations.

Aurionpro Wins its Largest Data Centre Order

Aurionpro Solutions Limited has bagged its largest-ever order in the fast-growing data centre segment, secured from one of the leading hyperscale data centre operators. The multi-year mandate entails the development of a large, AI-ready green data centre in India, designed to support next-generation, high-density computing workloads.

Valued at close to INR 350 crore, the engagement covers comprehensive design, detailed engineering, and end-to-end execution of MEP works, leveraging Aurionpro's in-house team of highly skilled specialists with expertise in mission-critical infrastructure design. Through this project, Aurionpro will partner in delivering its first AI-ready data centre, marking an important milestone as the Company contributes to the next phase of growth in India's technology ecosystem.

This project comes at a time when India's data centre market is experiencing unprecedented growth, with the country's data centre capacity reaching 1.5 GW in 2025.

Tushar Haralkar joins Aurva as Field CISO, India

Aurva today announced that Tushar Haralkar has joined the company as Field CISO, India. A cybersecurity leader with more than two decades of experience, including a 12-year tenure at IBM, Tushar brings deep expertise across data security, privacy, governance, and enterprise risk.

In his new role, he will work closely with CISOs and enterprise security leaders across India to help organizations navigate a rapidly evolving landscape shaped by sectoral regulations such as RBI and SEBI mandates, growing data sovereignty requirements, privacy expectations, and rapid AI adoption. He will focus on helping enterprises strengthen their approach to data security posture management, database activity monitoring, data lineage, and AI security to improve visibility, governance, and protection of sensitive data.

"Cybersecurity is at an important inflection point. Sectoral regulations such as RBI and SEBI mandates, growing data sovereignty requirements, privacy expectations, and rapid AI adoption are reshaping how organizations think about risk. Security teams need stronger visibility into how sensitive data is accessed, used, and moved across their environments.

BIF Hosts 1st Convergent Conference on Subsea Cables and Digital Cloud Infrastructure

The Broadband India Forum (BIF) convened its first convergent conference on subsea cables and digital cloud infrastructure under the theme "Connecting Continents, Scaling Digital Cloud," bringing together senior government officials, regulators including the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) and TRAI, and industry leaders from Google, Meta, Constl, Lightstorm, NEC, Ciena, and Tata Comms Ltd. to deliberate on strengthening India's global connectivity and digital infrastructure backbone.

While congratulating BIF for swiftly updating the last year's Subsea Conference to the 1st Convergent Conference on Subsea Cables and Digital Cloud Infrastructure, Shri A K Lahoti, Chairman TRAI highlighted the strategic importance of resilient connectivity infrastructure in enabling India's digital and economic ambitions. "Subsea cables and digital cloud are no longer parallel infrastructures; they are interdependent engines of growth. Subsea cables carry 95% of the world's data traffic, and as India surpasses 1 billion broadband subscribers, the demand for low-latency, hyperscale cloud services grows with it.

CitiusTech Appoints Dhaval Shah as Chief Business Officer - MedTech & Life Sciences

CitiusTech, a leading provider of healthcare technology services driving digital and AI excellence, announced that it has appointed Dhaval Shah as Chief Business Officer - MedTech & Life Sciences. Dhaval Shah is a distinguished healthcare industry executive with over 26 years of experience across HealthTech, imaging ISVs, providers, life sciences, and medical device companies. In his role as Chief Business Officer, Dhaval will lead enterprise market strategy, strengthen client partnerships, and accelerate business performance across CitiusTech's Medical Technology and Life Sciences segments.

A founding employee of CitiusTech, Dhaval has played a significant role in the company's growth and evolution during his more than 19 years with the organization. He oversees a substantial portion of the business and leads relationships with more than 50 MedTech and Life Sciences clients. As a member of the CitiusTech Executive Council, the company's six-member executive management team, Dhaval contributes to shaping CitiusTech's strategic direction.

Commvault Appoints Nithya Cadambi as GM -- Global Centres of Excellence

Commvault has announced the appointment of Nithya Cadambi as General Manager, Global Centres of Excellence (GCoEs). In this role, she will spearhead COE strategy, operational execution, and talent development to strengthen innovation, accelerate collaboration, and enhance customer outcomes.

Nithya takes on this expanded role after serving as Commvault's Senior Director, Finance in India and a business partner to Commvault's Chief Customer Officer organization. In that capacity, she drove financial strategy, operational discipline, and cross-functional alignment across customer-facing teams worldwide. Her leadership helped scale global capabilities, improve execution rigor, and strengthen collaboration across engineering, services, support, and sales engineering.

Nithya's appointment reflects both the impact she has delivered and the growing strategic importance of the GCoEs within Commvault's global capability center network.

AI Accelerates Adversaries and Reshapes the Attack Surface

CrowdStrike has released its 2026 Global Threat Report, revealing that AI is accelerating the adversary and expanding the enterprise attack surface. The average eCrime breakout time fell to just 29 minutes in 2025, with the fastest observed breakout occurring in only 27 seconds. Adversaries are also actively exploiting AI systems themselves, injecting malicious prompts into GenAI tools at more than 90 organizations and abusing AI development platforms. The Global Threat Report makes clear that as innovation accelerates, adversary exploitation follows.

AI-enabled adversaries increased operations by 89% year-over-year, weaponizing AI across reconnaissance, credential theft, and evasion. Intrusions now move through trusted identities, SaaS applications, and cloud infrastructure, blending into normal activity while compressing defenders' time to respond. AI is both the accelerant and the target.

"This is an AI arms race," said Adam Meyers, head of counter adversary operations at CrowdStrike.

CrowdStrike FalconID Extends Risk-Aware Identity Security to Multi-Factor Authentication

CrowdStrike has announced the general availability of FalconID, extending the Falcon* platform with zero-friction, phishing-resistant MFA. Identity is the front line of modern attacks, and this release advances CrowdStrike's Next-Gen Identity Security leadership with real-time, risk-aware protection against AI-accelerated phishing attacks and credential abuse at the point of authentication. With an intelligent security fabric spanning the identity lifecycle, CrowdStrike eliminates friction, increases productivity, and stops breaches.

"Traditional MFA is architecturally broken. Disconnected from real-time risk signals, it's blind to emerging threats, susceptible to MFA bypass attacks, and creates unnecessary friction," said Elia Zaitsev, chief technology officer at CrowdStrike. "FalconID accelerates CrowdStrike's identity security transformation, moving organizations beyond isolated, static access controls to continuous, risk-aware protection that stops breaches without slowing the business."

DOCOMO Begins Commercial Deployment of Agentic AI System

NTT DOCOMO, INC. has announced the start of commercial use of an agentic AI system in mobile network operations. The platform went live across the company's mobile network services on February 4, 2026.

Mobile networks are critical social infrastructure, supporting not only daily life and business activities but also public services and communications during disasters. Today's networks have become increasingly complex due to services across 4G and 5G, as well as multi-domain and multi-vendor environments. As a result, faster response times and swift service restoration have become increasingly important for maintenance operations in the event of network failures.

Previously, failures with established procedures were handled through automated, preconfigured processes. However, complex failures without predefined solutions have required multiple engineers to manually collect and analyze large volumes of data to identify root causes, often resulting in longer service restoration times. To address this challenge, DOCOMO developed an agentic AI platform built with AWS's managed services.

Epson Monna Lisa 64000 Printer Installed at Priyadharshini Designs, Karur

The Indian textile industry is witnessing a rapid shift toward digital printing as manufacturers seek shorter production cycles, greater design flexibility, consistent quality, and more sustainable processes.

Epson India today announced the installation of its 64-print head Monna Lisa 64000 digital textile printer at Priyadharshini Designs, Karur. This is the first installation of this printer in India with advanced pigment ink technology. This installation reinforces the growing adoption of high-capacity digital textile printing in the country.

Priyadharshini Designs, a renowned supplier to exporters in the home décor textile segment, is an existing Epson customer and has been successfully using the Monna Lisa 8000 for the past three years. Building on its experience with Epson's print quality, consistency, operational efficiency and post-sales support, the company has now invested in the Monna Lisa 64000 to significantly enhance production capacity, improve turnaround times, and better serve growing demand.

eScan Enterprise DLP Closes Critical GitHub Access Control Gap for Organizations

eScan has announced the successful deployment of GitHub Tenant Control within its Enterprise DLP solution, addressing a critical security gap affecting thousands of organisations that use GitHub Team or Organisation accounts without Enterprise-level access controls.

The common thread? Organisations struggle to control how employees access GitHub, particularly when they haven't invested in expensive Enterprise accounts with built-in authentication controls.

When a Mercedes-Benz employee accidentally leaked a GitHub token in June 2024, it granted unrestricted access to the company's entire GitHub Enterprise server source code. When The New York Times had credentials to their GitHub repositories inadvertently exposed in January 2024, their complete codebase appeared on 4chan months later. And in March 2025, the tj- actions/changed-files GitHub Action compromise exposed CI/CD secrets - including AWS keys, GitHub tokens, and private RSA keys - across 23,000 repositories.

Genesys Rolls out Agentic Virtual Agent Powered by LAMs for Enterprise CX

Genesys, a cloud leader in AI-Powered Experience Orchestration, today announced its pathbreaking agentic virtual agent built with large action models (LAMs) for enterprise CX, enabling autonomous, end-to-end resolution of customer requests. The new Genesys Cloud Agentic Virtual Agent understands customer goals, determines the next steps and executes complex actions across front and back-office systems and teams. The launch marks a shift from reactive self-service to autonomous, outcome-driven customer engagement that reduces effort, improves operational efficiency and scales reliably across the enterprise.

Today, ambitions for bot-driven self-service are high, but confidence is still low. According to a Gartner report, "The average self-service success rate is just 22%. Forty-six per cent of leaders surveyed indicated that increasing self-service success is a Top 3 priority for them in 2026." i

The challenge is that most automation isn't built for the way people want to interact or how companies manage work.

Global CyberPeace Summit 2026 Concludes at Bharat Mandapam

Coinciding with Safer Internet Day, the Global CyberPeace Summit 2026 concluded today at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, marking the culmination of three days of global dialogue, capacity building, and action-oriented collaboration focused on Trust & Safety, CyberPeace, and responsible digital governance. The summit brought together governments, parliamentarians, law enforcement agencies, defence and diplomatic leadership, global technology platforms, industry, academia, civil society, and citizens, the Summit reinforcing a central message: digital trust must be built with people at the centre and not as an afterthought of technology or policy. Addressing the audience, Major Vineet Kumar, Founder & Global President, CyberPeace, said, "Safer Internet Day reminds us that trust and safety online cannot be achieved through policy alone.

DIGEST

HITACHI VANTARA EXPANDS HITACHI IQ CAPABILITIES

HITACHI VANTARA, A LEADING DATA STORAGE, INFRASTRUCTURE AND HYBRID CLOUD MANAGEMENT SUBSIDIARY OF HITACHI LTD., TODAY ANNOUNCED NEW CAPABILITIES ACROSS THE HITACHI IQ PORTFOLIO, INCLUDING ENHANCED AI BLUEPRINTS AND MULTI-AGENT COORDINATION IN HITACHI IQ STUDIO, EXPANDED NVIDIA AI INFRASTRUCTURE OPTIONS, AND DEEPER DATA INTEGRATION TO SUPPORT AGENTIC AI IN ON-PREMISES AND VIRTUALIZED ENVIRONMENTS. TOGETHER, THESE ENHANCEMENTS POSITION HITACHI IQ AS A COMPREHENSIVE, ENTERPRISE-READY AI SOLUTION, ENABLING CUSTOMERS TO BUILD AND MANAGE AI AGENTS WITHIN THEIR OWN ENVIRONMENTS. AS ORGANIZATIONS MOVE FROM AI EXPERIMENTATION TO SCALED DEPLOYMENT, MANY ARE FACING GROWING CHALLENGES TIED TO DATA COMPLEXITY, AI SOVEREIGNTY AND EVOLVING GOVERNANCE AND SECURITY REQUIREMENTS.

MICROSOFT DEEPENS INDIA AI BET WITH INFRASTRUCTURE, SKILLING PUSH

MICROSOFT IS DOUBLING DOWN ON INDIA AS A STRATEGIC AI GROWTH MARKET, OUTLINING A MULTI-LAYERED PUSH SPANNING CLOUD INFRASTRUCTURE, AI SERVICES, AND WORKFORCE SKILLING. AT THE INDIA AI IMPACT SUMMIT 2026, THE COMPANY EMPHASIZED DEMOCRATIZING AI ACCESS ACROSS ENTERPRISES, STARTUPS, AND GOVERNMENT ECOSYSTEMS. WITH DEMAND FOR SOVEREIGN AI CAPABILITIES RISING, MICROSOFT IS EXPANDING ITS DATA CENTER FOOTPRINT AND ENABLING LOCALIZED AI DEPLOYMENTS ALIGNED WITH REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS.

INFOSYS AND AWS ALLIANCE SIGNALS NEXT PHASE OF ENTERPRISE AI

INFOSYS HAS EXPANDED ITS STRATEGIC COLLABORATION WITH AMAZON WEB SERVICES TO ACCELERATE ENTERPRISE ADOPTION OF GENERATIVE AND AGENTIC AI. THE PARTNERSHIP INTEGRATES INFOSYS TOPAZ WITH AWS'S AI AND CLOUD STACK, ENABLING AUTOMATION ACROSS BUSINESS-CRITICAL FUNCTIONS SUCH AS HR, FINANCE, AND SOFTWARE ENGINEERING. THE FOCUS IS SHIFTING FROM ASSISTIVE AI TO AUTONOMOUS SYSTEMS CAPABLE OF EXECUTING COMPLEX WORKFLOWS WITH MINIMAL HUMAN INTERVENTION. THIS REFLECTS A BROADER PIVOT WITHIN INDIAN IT TOWARD HIGHER-VALUE, AI-LED TRANSFORMATION DEALS. BY LEVERAGING AWS'S SCALABLE INFRASTRUCTURE AND INFOSYS' DOMAIN EXPERTISE, THE ALLIANCE AIMS TO DELIVER MEASURABLE BUSINESS OUTCOMES, INCLUDING PRODUCTIVITY GAINS AND COST OPTIMIZATION. ENTERPRISES ARE INCREASINGLY DEMANDING END-TO-END AI INTEGRATION RATHER THAN SILOED DEPLOYMENTS, MAKING SUCH PARTNERSHIPS CRITICAL. THE MOVE ALSO SIGNALS INTENSIFYING COMPETITION AMONG IT MAJORS TO CAPTURE THE NEXT WAVE OF AI-DRIVEN ENTERPRISE SPENDING GLOBALLY.



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Artificial
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- NVMe® power states
- Firmware activated without reset
- Secure firmware download
- Hardware root of trust, secure signed firmware
- Self-encrypting drive (SED) with AES-256 encryption
- Micron's Secure Encrypted Environment (SEE)
- Self-monitoring and reporting technology (SMART)

Contact us – expert talk

Mr. Sanjeeo Singh
Lead – Enterprise Business
Contact: +91 8800507776

TCS Scales AI-first Strategy Across Core Industries

Tata Consultancy Services is accelerating its AI-first strategy, embedding intelligence across enterprise operations in sectors such as banking, retail, and manufacturing. The company is investing in proprietary AI platforms, cloud integration, and domain-specific solutions designed to deliver measurable outcomes at scale. As global clients move from pilot programs to full-scale deployments, TCS is focusing on integrating AI into core business processes rather than isolated use cases. This includes automation of supply chains, predictive analytics for financial services, and AI-driven customer engagement platforms. The strategy reflects a broader shift within India's IT services sector toward outcome-based delivery models. TCS is also strengthening partnerships with hyperscalers to enhance its AI capabilities and expand its global reach. With enterprises demanding faster ROI and operational efficiency, TCS is positioning itself as a key enabler of large-scale digital reinvention in the AI era.

HCLTech Pushes for IP-led Innovation in AI Era

HCLTech is advocating a structural shift in India's IT industry—from services-led growth to an intellectual property-driven innovation model. The company is investing in proprietary platforms, AI solutions, and engineering capabilities to create differentiated offerings. Leadership has emphasized that owning IP will be critical in capturing long-term value in the AI economy, where commoditized services are increasingly under pressure. HCLTech is focusing on building reusable AI frameworks and industry-specific solutions that can be scaled globally. This transition also involves deeper collaboration with clients to co-create digital products and platforms. The strategy aligns with global trends where technology providers are moving up the value chain to deliver end-to-end transformation rather than execution services. As competition intensifies, HCLTech's IP-led approach aims to strengthen margins, enhance client stickiness, and position the company as a leader in next-generation enterprise technology.

AWS Expands India Cloud Footprint Amid AI Demand Surge

Amazon Web Services is expanding its India footprint as demand for AI and cloud infrastructure accelerates across enterprises. The company is investing in data centers, edge infrastructure, and AI services to support large-scale deployments. India is emerging as a key market for AWS, driven by digital transformation across sectors and increasing regulatory focus on data localization. AWS is also enhancing its developer ecosystem and enterprise solutions to cater to growing demand for generative AI and analytics. The expansion aligns with broader industry trends where hyperscalers are racing to build capacity to support AI workloads. Enterprises are increasingly adopting hybrid and multi-cloud strategies, making AWS's scalable and flexible infrastructure critical. With competition intensifying from global and domestic players, AWS's continued investments highlight the strategic importance of India in the global cloud and AI landscape.

Google Cloud Strengthens India's Digital Infrastructure Backbone

Google Cloud is reinforcing its India strategy through expanded data center investments and AI-enabled cloud solutions. The company is focusing on helping enterprises modernize infrastructure while enabling scalable AI deployments. With increasing demand for compliance and data sovereignty, Google Cloud is aligning its offerings with India's regulatory environment. The company is also investing in industry-specific solutions and developer tools to accelerate adoption across sectors. As enterprises transition to hybrid cloud models, Google Cloud is positioning itself as a key enabler of flexible, secure, and cost-efficient architectures. The move reflects a broader push by hyperscalers to capture India's rapidly growing cloud market. With AI workloads becoming more complex, the need for robust infrastructure is rising, making data center expansion a strategic priority. Google Cloud's investments underline India's role as a critical hub in the global digital economy.

India's IT Sector Transitions to AI-led Growth Paradigm

India's IT industry is undergoing a fundamental transformation, shifting from traditional outsourcing to AI-driven services and innovation. Companies are investing in advanced technologies, including generative AI, automation, and analytics, to deliver higher-value solutions. The rise of Global Capability Centers (GCCs) is further accelerating this shift, enabling enterprises to build innovation hubs within India. This evolution is creating new opportunities for talent while redefining the industry's growth model. IT firms are focusing on outcome-based delivery, leveraging AI to improve efficiency and drive business results for clients. The transition also reflects changing client expectations, with enterprises seeking strategic partners rather than service providers. As global competition intensifies, India's IT sector is leveraging its talent pool and technological expertise to maintain leadership. The shift to AI-led growth is expected to drive the next phase of expansion, positioning India as a global hub for digital innovation.

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India AI Impact Summit Signals Policy-Industry Convergence

The India AI Impact Summit 2026 highlighted the growing alignment between policy frameworks and industry ambitions in advancing AI adoption. The event brought together technology leaders, policymakers, and enterprises to discuss governance, infrastructure, and innovation. A key focus was on building a robust AI ecosystem that balances growth with ethical considerations and regulatory compliance. The summit underscored India's ambition to become a global AI leader by leveraging its talent base and digital infrastructure. Discussions also emphasized the need for public-private partnerships to accelerate adoption and address challenges such as data access and skill gaps. As AI becomes central to economic growth, such platforms are playing a critical role in shaping strategy and collaboration. The convergence of policy and industry initiatives is expected to drive large-scale AI deployment across sectors, reinforcing India's position in the global technology landscape.

Hyperscalers Ramp Up India Data Center Investments

Global hyperscalers, including Microsoft, Amazon Web Services, and Google, are accelerating investments in India's data center ecosystem. The surge is driven by rising AI workloads, cloud adoption, and regulatory requirements for data localization. These investments are transforming India into a major global hub for digital infrastructure. Enterprises are increasingly relying on scalable and secure environments to support AI and analytics applications. The expansion is also creating opportunities for ancillary industries, including power, real estate, and connectivity. As competition intensifies, hyperscalers are focusing on differentiated offerings, including edge computing and industry-specific solutions. The rapid growth of data centers underscores the strategic importance of infrastructure in enabling AI adoption. India's favorable policy environment and growing digital economy are further attracting global investments in this space.

Government Incentives Boost Cloud Ecosystem Growth

India's policy push to attract cloud investments is gaining traction, with incentives aimed at positioning the country as a global data center hub. Measures such as tax benefits for foreign cloud providers are encouraging hyperscalers to expand operations. The initiative aligns with the government's broader vision of strengthening digital infrastructure and supporting AI adoption. Enterprises stand to benefit from improved access to scalable and cost-efficient cloud services. The policy environment is also fostering innovation by enabling startups and developers to leverage advanced technologies. As demand for AI and data-driven solutions grows, such incentives are expected to accelerate infrastructure development. The move highlights the critical role of government support in shaping the technology ecosystem. By attracting global investments, India is strengthening its position as a key player in the global digital economy.

Infosys Expands AI Ecosystem Through Strategic Alliances

Infosys is building a robust AI ecosystem through partnerships with global technology providers and startups. The company is focusing on enhancing its generative AI capabilities and delivering end-to-end solutions for enterprise clients. By integrating AI into its service offerings, Infosys aims to drive efficiency, innovation, and business transformation. The strategy reflects a broader industry trend toward collaborative innovation, where partnerships play a key role in accelerating adoption. Infosys is also investing in talent development and research to strengthen its AI capabilities. As enterprises increasingly adopt AI, the demand for integrated solutions is rising, making ecosystem partnerships critical. The company's approach positions it as a leader in the evolving AI landscape, enabling clients to navigate the complexities of digital transformation. The focus on collaboration underscores the importance of agility and innovation in the competitive IT services market.

AI Adoption Expands Across Enterprise Functions in India

AI adoption in India is no longer confined to IT departments, as enterprises integrate the technology across business functions. From customer service and marketing to finance and operations, AI is driving efficiency and innovation. This shift reflects the growing recognition of AI as a strategic asset rather than a technical tool. Organizations are investing in training and infrastructure to support widespread adoption. The involvement of non-IT departments in funding AI initiatives highlights its enterprise-wide impact. As businesses seek to improve decision-making and customer experience, AI is becoming central to their strategies. The expansion of AI use cases is also creating new opportunities for technology providers and startups. However, challenges such as data quality and integration remain. Addressing these issues will be critical to sustaining momentum and achieving long-term success in AI adoption.

Hybrid Cloud Emerges as Enterprise Standard

Hybrid cloud architectures are becoming the preferred model for Indian enterprises, offering a balance between flexibility, cost, and compliance. Organizations are combining on-premise and cloud environments to optimize performance and manage data effectively. This approach is particularly relevant for AI workloads, which require scalable and secure infrastructure. Enterprises are also leveraging hybrid models to address regulatory requirements and data privacy concerns. The shift is driving demand for advanced cloud management and integration solutions. Technology providers are responding by offering tailored services to support hybrid deployments. As digital transformation accelerates, hybrid cloud is expected to play a critical role in enabling innovation. The trend reflects a broader shift toward more flexible and resilient IT architectures. By adopting hybrid models, enterprises can better navigate the complexities of modern technology environments.

India's IT Industry Eyes \$350 Billion Milestone

India's IT and BPM sector is on track to reach a \$350 billion valuation by 2026, driven by AI, cloud, and digital transformation initiatives. The industry continues to be a key contributor to economic growth and employment. Companies are investing in advanced technologies to maintain competitiveness and meet evolving client demands. The growth is supported by a strong talent pool and increasing global demand for digital services. As enterprises adopt AI and automation, the nature of work is also evolving, creating new opportunities and challenges. The industry's ability to adapt to these changes will be critical to sustaining growth. With continued investments and innovation, India's IT sector is well-positioned to achieve its ambitious targets. The milestone reflects the sector's resilience and its central role in the global technology landscape.

Enterprise AI Spending Gains Strong Momentum

Enterprise spending on AI in India is accelerating, reflecting a shift from experimentation to large-scale deployment. Organizations are investing in infrastructure, training, and applications to drive measurable outcomes. The focus is on achieving ROI and integrating AI into core business processes. This trend is supported by advancements in technology and increasing awareness of AI's potential. As competition intensifies, enterprises are leveraging AI to gain a competitive edge. The growth in spending is also creating opportunities for technology providers and service firms. However, challenges such as scalability and governance remain. Addressing these issues will be key to sustaining growth and maximizing the benefits of AI. The momentum in AI spending underscores its importance as a driver of innovation and economic growth.

Data Centers Power India's Digital Transformation

Data centers are becoming the backbone of India's digital economy, supporting the growth of cloud computing and AI. Investments by global and domestic players are driving rapid expansion in capacity and capabilities. The demand is fueled by increasing data consumption, regulatory requirements, and the adoption of advanced technologies. Data centers are also playing a critical role in enabling digital services across sectors. As the ecosystem evolves, there is a growing focus on sustainability and energy efficiency. The development of data center infrastructure is creating opportunities for related industries, including power and real estate. The growth of this sector underscores its importance in supporting India's digital ambitions. By building robust infrastructure, India is strengthening its position in the global technology landscape.

Agentic AI Emerges as Next Enterprise Frontier

Agentic AI is gaining traction as enterprises explore systems capable of autonomous decision-making and execution. This next phase of AI adoption represents a significant shift from assistive tools to intelligent agents. Companies are experimenting with use cases across industries, including finance, healthcare, and telecommunications. The potential benefits include improved efficiency, reduced costs, and enhanced decision-making. However, the adoption of agentic AI also presents challenges, particularly around governance, security, and integration. Enterprises are taking a cautious approach, focusing on building the necessary infrastructure and capabilities. As the technology matures, it is expected to play a key role in shaping the future of work. The rise of agentic AI highlights the evolving nature of enterprise technology and its impact on business operations.



CHIRAG SHAH
Founder & CEO, Pulse

PROFILE

As the Founding CEO of Pulse, Chirag Shah leads the company's strategic direction with a strong focus on product innovation, market expansion, and customer engagement. Deeply involved in product design and development, he ensures that every innovation aligns with long-term objectives. His leadership style emphasizes clarity, accountability, and a culture of growth and empowerment.

With his unique blend of technical expertise, financial acumen, and entrepreneurial success, Chirag brings a holistic perspective to fintech.

HOW SAAS IS RESHAPING SME FINANCIAL PLANNING WITH PREDICTIVE INSIGHTS

From banks and insurers to logistics providers, pharmaceutical companies, governments, and NGOs, the Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) model has fundamentally transformed how organisations operate and communicate. This article offers practical insights on shifting from reactive reporting to forward-looking financial planning

From banks and insurers to logistics providers, pharmaceutical companies, governments, and NGOs, the Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) model has fundamentally transformed how organisations operate and communicate. What began as a technology shift has evolved into a trillion-dollar industry powering the modern digital economy.

A curious question to ponder would be, how to have something as powerful as SaaS to influence MSMEs. In India, 5.93 crore MSMEs contribute immensely to the nation – nearly 30 per cent to the country's GDP; employ directly and indirectly about 110 million people; provide avenues to export and precious forex – that is 45.73% to India's exports.

The impact of SaaS to traditionally run businesses has been nothing short of phenomenal. About fifteen years ago, with the Indian Railways, for example, booking preferential seats or meals of one's choice was an unthinkable proposition. In fact, booking a ticket itself was a complex and tiring proposition. IRCTC, today, has changed the friction points completely. Technological adoption and SaaS platforms have enabled this transition.

Resolving Credit Invisibility Problem

At a national level, technology has enabled millions of Indian MSMEs. The biggest problem that has been solved is the aspect of financial identity. A significant proportion of small businesses operate in ways that leave little to no formal credit trail. Without audited financials, collateral, or credit history, they remain invisible to traditional lenders.

The stark consequence here is despite contributing nearly a third of India's GDP, MSMEs account for less than 20% of formal credit disbursed by scheduled commercial banks. The gap between what MSMEs need and what the formal credit system offers them has historically been bridged by informal moneylenders at unviable interest rates.

This is where SaaS-based financial platforms are

beginning to rewrite the rules. When an MSME consistently uses a digital platform to manage invoices, track receivables, and reconcile accounts, it generates something invaluable; a structured, time-stamped record of business activity.

Lenders and NBFCs are increasingly recognising this data as a proxy for creditworthiness. Cash flow-based underwriting, which evaluates the rhythm and reliability of a business's inflows and outflows rather than just its balance sheet, is gaining ground precisely because SaaS platforms make such data legible and verifiable. For a kirana store owner or a small textile exporter, this shift could mean the difference between securing working capital at a reasonable rate or being shut out of the formal credit ecosystem entirely.

Account Aggregator Framework:

India's Account Aggregator framework, launched under the Reserve Bank of India's guidance, is yet another example of a consequential financial infrastructure developments for MSMEs in recent memory. At its core, the framework allows businesses to share consented financial data, bank statements, GST returns, tax filings across institutions in a standardised, machine-readable format. What once required weeks of paperwork, branch visits, and document notarisation can now happen in minutes, with the business owner in full control of what is shared and with whom.

For SaaS platforms serving MSMEs, the Account Aggregator network is a significant enabler. Platforms can now pull in a richer, more accurate picture of a business's financial health, not just from internal transaction data but from across the banking and tax ecosystem. This multi-source data environment dramatically improves the quality of predictive models. Cash flow forecasts become more reliable when they are built on actual bank movement data rather than self-reported figures. Credit risk assessments become sharper when GST



filing patterns and bank statement trends are analysed together.

The downstream benefit for MSMEs is considerable. Financial institutions plugged into this ecosystem can make faster, more confident lending decisions. Loan turnaround times that once stretched to weeks are compressing to days. For a small manufacturer managing seasonal inventory cycles or a service business waiting on delayed receivables, access to timely credit is not a luxury, it is operational oxygen. As more banks, insurers, and fintech lenders integrate with the Account Aggregator framework, the MSME that has adopted a SaaS-based financial platform is uniquely positioned to benefit because its data is already organised, current, and shareable.

What Ails Indian Msms

A revolution the size of IRCTC may take time to charter, but it is evident that to influence such a transitional change, we understand the typical problems with MSMEs. The biggest problem or challenge with MSMEs is the limited access to accurate financial foresight. This is a recurring theme, given a 2023 report by the International Finance Corporation, nearly 40% SME failures globally have been attributed to poor financial planning and inadequate cash flow management.

Most SMEs have relied on spreadsheets, retrospective accounting, and intuition-based decision-making. This also is a factor for the conventional financial planning for SMEs being dependent heavily on historical data and static assumptions.

Cash flows with MSMEs are great tools today, however, there is no accuracy in these estimates since the business could be cyclical. A typical small business owner might review quarterly statements, track cash flow manually, and make budget decisions based on past performance. Such an approach fails to account for real-time market shifts, sudden demand fluctuations, or emerging cost pressures.

The integration of predictive analytics into SaaS-based financial platforms is now enabling SMEs to move from reactive management to proactive strategy, with measurable improvements in forecasting accuracy, risk mitigation, and capital efficiency.

How Different is Predictive Analytics?

To a large extent tools such as predictive analytics can enable MSMEs. SaaS platforms powered by machine learning algorithms and real-time data integration can generate forward-looking financial insights with a degree of precision that was previously unattainable.

While a lot of it is premised around the ability to analyse historical transaction data, market trends, customer behaviour patterns, and external economic indicators; there's also an outward looking integration. That is, peer comparison, systems which can benchmark with external data-points for validation can be a great tool to forecast real revenue trajectories. These could also enable the anticipated expense fluctuations and accordingly model diverse business scenarios simultaneously.

Leveraging Saas

Integration with predictive analytics can help several business functions - point-of-sale data, inventory turnover rates, seasonal demand patterns, and even local economic indicators to project cash flow needs for the coming quarter. This is a level of insight that was once available only to enterprises with dedicated finance teams; today, it is accessible through a monthly subscription.

Cash flow uncertainty remains the single largest cause of SME distress. A Niti Aayog & Institute for Competitiveness report reveals that nearly 52% of small businesses experience cash flow gaps at least once a year, and 18% cite cash flow problems as a primary barrier to expansion. SaaS platforms with predictive capabilities address this by generating rolling cash flow forecasts that extend weeks or months into the future. Studies around the globe

have indicated how cloud-based financial tools with predictive analytics are relevant to MSMEs. In Croatia, for instance, MSMEs leveraged business intelligence to reduce time to reconciliation while in US and Nigeria, predictive analytics improved cash flow visibility.

SaaS platforms, and those enabled by AI-driven financial forecasting reduced forecasting errors by a margin of 30 to 50% according to a study by McKinsey. The research also found that SaaS platforms enabled businesses with improved working capital efficiency of up to 10%. Additionally, research from Gartner indicates that organisations employing dynamic financial planning techniques are 2.6 times more likely to outperform their competitors in revenue growth. For SMEs, this agility is particularly valuable.

Better Compliance

It is an assumption that since SMEs are smaller, the impact to external shocks is limited. Unfortunately, SMEs are as vulnerable, if not more, to financial shocks than even larger corporations. Limited capital reserves and restricted access to emergency funding means access to predictive analytics can be a boon with compliance and ability to get early warning.

Many platforms, in addition to internal data also provide a glimpse of external indicators such as regulatory changes, market trends, customer payment behaviours and other predictive models to detect anomalies. These could be a sudden slowdown in receivables, a spike in customer churn, or an unusual pattern in expense growth triggers alerts, allowing business owners to intervene early.

Perhaps the most underappreciated benefit of predictive SaaS is its ability to deliver personalised financial guidance without human intervention. Large corporations employ chief financial officers and teams of analysts to interpret data and recommend strategy. SMEs typically have neither the budget nor the talent pool for such resources.

The Road Ahead

As artificial intelligence models become more sophisticated and industry-specific, the next generation of predictive SaaS will offer even deeper integration. India is entering a newer realm with SaaS and MSMEs, where new-age futuristic platforms will benchmark SME performance against anonymised sector-wide data.

For Indian SMEs, accessing such SaaS platforms could be a timely intervention to grow better. The new era of personalised financial intelligence for businesses could be a fundamental reimagining on how businesses navigate uncertainty, allocate capital, and pursue growth. SME

PALO ALTO NETWORKS NEXTWAVE PROGRAM: ACCELERATING PARTNER PROFITABILITY AND AI-DRIVEN SECURITY OUTCOMES

By focusing on platformization, Palo Alto Networks enables partners to integrate their customers' security stacks across the network, cloud, and SOC—reducing complexity while increasing high-margin, partner-led service opportunities.



SIMONE GAMMERI
CHIEF PARTNERSHIPS OFFICER,
PALO ALTO NETWORKS

"NEXTWAVE PARTNER PROGRAM REWARDS 'PLATFORMIZATION' OVER TRANSACTIONS, EMPOWERING PARTNERS TO DISMANTLE THE COMPLEXITY THAT LEAVES CUSTOMERS VULNERABLE. THIS PROGRAM ISN'T JUST ABOUT SELLING SOFTWARE; IT'S ABOUT ENSURING CUSTOMERS ACHIEVE TOTAL, AI-DRIVEN RESILIENCE WITH A SINGLE, UNIFIED DEFENSE."

Palo Alto Networks has announced the next generation of its NextWave Partner Program, fundamentally redefining partner profitability for the AI era. As the industry moves toward AI-driven security, NextWave moves beyond transactional volume to reward partners who deliver platform-centric security outcomes.

Focus on Platformization

The evolved program enables the entire partner ecosystem to move away from the 'point-product' trap. By focusing on platformization, Palo Alto Networks enables partners to integrate their customers' security stacks across the network, cloud, and SOC—reducing complexity while increasing high-margin, partner-led service opportunities.

Built On Direct Global Partner Community Feedback

Available to partners now, the new NextWave Partner Program is built on direct feedback from the global partner community, focusing on three transformative benefits:

- **Enhancing Partner Margins:** Streamlined rebates focus on Next-Generation Firewalls (NGFW), Next-Generation Security (NGS) and platformization to reward technical expertise and maximize profitability.
- **Accelerating Deal Velocity:** Enhanced Configure, Price, Quote (CPQ) and new automated deal registrations, combined with improved service delivery tools, to reduce friction and speed up time to close.
- **Reinvesting For Growth:** A new Partner Development Fund (PDF) reinvests earned rebates directly into partner-led demand generation, training, and solution development to drive differentiation and accelerate joint customer success.

Tailored Paths for Every Partner:

- **Managed Security Service Providers (MSSPs):** Predictable, tiered pricing to build high-margin managed services to ensure accelerated outcomes.
- **Distributors:** Enhanced capabilities, governance and support for Distributor Managed Partner growth.

- **Global System Integrators (GSIs):** A "Global Path" rewarding multi-theater influence and strategic consulting with a white glove experience, coming later this year.
- **Authorized Services (ASC & APS):** Real-time deployment assistance to ensure "first-time-right" customer implementations.

Addressing Surging Demand for AI-Driven Security Platforms

"Our partner ecosystem is more critical than ever in addressing the demand for AI-driven security platforms," said Simone Gammeri, Chief Partnerships Officer, Palo Alto Networks. "Unlike transactional programs, the NextWave Partner Program rewards 'platformization' over transactions, so we are empowering our partners to dismantle the complexity that leaves customers vulnerable. This program isn't just about selling software; it's about ensuring customers achieve total, AI-driven resilience with a single, unified defense."

Hugues Foulon, CEO, Orange Cyberdefense, said, "The NextWave Partner Program serves as a catalyst for deeper strategic collaboration and trust between Palo Alto Networks and Orange Cyberdefense. By increasing transparency, especially around team incentives, we are able to align our efforts more closely, foster co-innovation, and tailor Palo Alto Networks' solutions to better safeguard our joint customers against evolving cyber threats." SME

THE NEXTWAVE PARTNER PROGRAM SERVES AS A CATALYST FOR DEEPER STRATEGIC COLLABORATION AND TRUST BETWEEN PALO ALTO NETWORKS AND ORANGE CYBERDEFENSE, BY INCREASING TRANSPARENCY, ESPECIALLY AROUND TEAM INCENTIVES.

FORGING STRATEGIC ALLIANCE TO POWER INDIA'S NEXT-GEN CYBERSECURITY AND IT VISIBILITY LANDSCAPE

The Redington–Liongard strategic partnership aims to bring advanced asset intelligence and IT visibility capabilities to managed service providers (MSPs), system integrators, and enterprises across India



SRIDHAR S
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT,
SSG, REDINGTON

"OUR TRADITIONAL IT INFRASTRUCTURE PARTNERS AS WELL AS BORN-IN-THE-CLOUD PARTNER COMMUNITY, AN ECOSYSTEM DEPTH THAT ENABLES US TO TAKE LIONGARD'S CAPABILITIES TO A GENUINELY DIVERSE CROSS-SECTION OF CUSTOMERS, FROM ESTABLISHED ENTERPRISES TO DIGITAL NATIVES GROWING AT SPEED."

Redington Limited, a leading Indian integrated technology solutions provider and a Fortune India 500 company, today announced a strategic partnership with Liongard to bring advanced asset intelligence and IT visibility capabilities to managed service providers (MSPs), system inte-

grators, and enterprises across India.

From Endpoint and Data Centre to Cloud And AI-Led Environments

Redington's role in India's technology landscape goes beyond distribution. It is the orchestrator of a cybersecurity ecosystem that spans the full IT estate, from endpoint and data centre to cloud and AI-led environments. With over 75,000 channel partners, 450+ brand associations, and deep technical practices across cybersecurity domains, Redington connects the right solutions to the right partners with the enablement and services muscle to drive real adoption. Liongard's automated asset discovery and configuration intelligence now completes a critical layer in that chain, giving partners and their customers continuous visibility across every system, whether on-premises, in the cloud, or hybrid.

Addressing the Complexity of Hybrid and Multi-Cloud Environments

As cloud adoption in India accelerates at an unprecedented pace, organizations are managing increasingly complex hybrid environments—spanning on-premises infrastructure, multi-cloud workloads, SaaS platforms, and emerging AI-driven systems. This expanding digital footprint requires more than point security solutions; it demands continuous, automated visibility across the entire IT estate. With Liongard, now a part of Redington's portfolio, partners gain access to a unified asset intelligence layer that delivers automated discovery, configuration monitoring, and real-time change detection across environments. Unlike traditional cybersecurity offerings that operate in silos, Liongard provides contextual visibility across systems, helping MSPs and enterprises proactively identify misconfigurations, reduce risk exposure, and strengthen compliance posture. Leveraging Redington's extensive reach and its presence across both traditional infrastructure and born-in-the-cloud ecosystems, this partnership ensures asset intelligence and hybrid IT visibility are delivered at scale, with speed, end-to-end enablement, and coverage across all seg-

ments of India's evolving technology landscape, without any limitation to specific markets.

Leveraging Redington's Vast Channel Ecosystem

What sets this partnership apart is the unique reach Redington brings to Liongard's India go-to-market. Redington's partner ecosystem spans both traditional IT infrastructure resellers and born-in-the-cloud partners, an identity few distribution players in India can claim. This dual presence means Liongard's solutions can be delivered to conventional enterprises modernising their infrastructure, as well as digital-native businesses scaling rapidly in the cloud, a breadth of coverage that is uniquely Redington's.

Enabling Faster Deployment and Business Outcomes via End-to-End Support

Redington's services portfolio further strengthens this proposition. By complementing its partners' technical capabilities with pre-sales, implementation, and post-sales support, Redington acts as an ecosystem orchestrator. Not just distributing technology, but enabling partners to adopt, deploy, and derive value from it faster.

Bridging Traditional Enterprises and Digital-Native Businesses

"Redington has built its identity as a technology ecosystem orchestrator, connecting the right solutions to the right partners at the right time, across the full spectrum of IT. Our cybersecurity portfolio is one of the most comprehensive in India, stretching from endpoint security to cloud-native and AI-led environments. As cloud adoption accelerates, the attack surface grows in step, and that makes continuous, dynamic monitoring of every asset across the estate not just useful, but essential. Liongard closes a critical gap in that chain by delivering automated discovery and configuration intelligence that binds the entire

To access more info login to:
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REWRITING INDIA'S CHANNEL PLAYBOOK: HOW CHECK POINT SILENTLY HELPS TURN RESELLERS INTO CYBERSECURITY ADVISORS

With cyber threats scaling alongside cloud, AI, and data centre growth, the role of channel partners is undergoing a structural shift. Check Point's Channel leader Manish Alshi explains why the future belongs to partners who can lead transformation—not just transactions.

MANASH RANJAN DEBATA
manash@accentinfomedia.com

With rising ransomware cyberattacks on IT infrastructure, businesses have realized the importance of embracing zero tolerance for gaps in their security strategy. They are increasingly investing on strengthening their cybersecurity to secure their crown jewels and their valuable data. This has thrown open a big opportunity for cybersecurity players.

As the India market remains in the eye of a major digital transformation buoyed by back-to-back tech-centred Union Budgets, SME Channels embarks upon recording the voices of the who's who of the Cybersecurity landscape.

As part of our effort to make the voices of major security players heard by the channel community, here is a special interaction with cybersecurity major Check Point.

In this special interaction with SME Channels, Manish Alshi, Head of Channels and Growth Technologies – India & SAARC at Check Point Software Technologies, outlines the company's strategy to address the rising demand for unified cybersecurity solutions, shares his outlook on the evolving threat landscape, and details how his company is preparing partners for the next phase of industry evolution.

Edited excerpts...

What are your top strategic priorities for strengthening the partner ecosystem in India over the next 12-18 months?

Our top partner priority is enabling partners to lead AI-powered cyber security transformation conversations, not just infrastructure refresh cycles.

India's cyber security market is expected to grow at over 18% CAGR through 2028 according to IMARC Group, driven by AI adoption, cloud expansion, data centre growth, and regulatory

frameworks such as DPDP. This creates a massive opportunity for partners who can deliver unified, prevention-first security.

Over the next 12–18 months, we are focusing on:

- Expanding AI Security and Exposure Management certifications tailored for India & SAARC partners.
- Strengthening MSSP capabilities to address mid-market and regional enterprise demand.
- Driving adoption of our four strategic pillars — Hybrid Mesh Network Security, Workspace Security, Exposure Management, and AI Security — across verticals such as BFSI, manufacturing, healthcare, and government.

As a 100% channel-driven company, our India growth strategy is built around empowering partners to become trusted cyber security advisors in an AI-driven economy.

How is the channel strategy evolving to address the growing demand for unified cybersecurity platforms rather than point solutions?

Indian enterprises are moving rapidly toward hybrid cloud, multi-cloud, and AI-enabled environments. Fragmented point solutions can no longer protect distributed workloads, hyperscale data centres, or remote workforces.

Instead of selling isolated firewalls or endpoint products, Check Point partners are enabled to deliver a unified cybersecurity platform that integrates:

- Network and data centre security
- Cloud and SASE protection
- Workspace and email security
- Exposure Management (CTEM)
- AI security governance

With Indian organizations facing an average of 1,968 cyberattacks per week globally in 2025 according to Check Point Research, prevention-first, AI-powered platforms provide better secu-

rity effectiveness and simplified management.

This evolution allows partners to position themselves as transformation enablers rather than product resellers.

What key investments is Check Point making to help partners build deeper technical and services capabilities?

We consistently invest heavily in partner enablement to build advanced technical depth and services capabilities.

These include :

- Expanded India-focused certification programs aligned to AI Security and Exposure Management.
- Professional Services Certification initiatives to help partners deliver complex deployments.
- Sales and technical workshops focused on AI-driven cyber security, Zero Trust, and hybrid mesh architectures.
- MSSP acceleration programs to support recurring revenue models.
- Demonstrating Check Point ThreatCloud AI, which analyzes over 2 billion threat indicators daily, strengthens partner differentiation by enabling superior threat detection accuracy.

PARTNERS WHO ALIGN WITH AI-FIRST, PREVENTION-FIRST CYBER SECURITY AND SECURE CUSTOMERS' DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION JOURNEYS WILL LEAD THE NEXT PHASE OF GROWTH.

**MANISH ALSHI**

Senior Director, Channels & Alliances, Check Point Software Technologies India & South Asia

"THE REAL SHIFT IS THIS—PARTNERS WHO CONTINUE SELLING PRODUCTS WILL STRUGGLE, BUT THOSE WHO LEAD AI-POWERED CYBERSECURITY TRANSFORMATION WILL DEFINE THE NEXT DECADE."

Our goal is to help Indian partners move up the value chain — from deployment to consulting, optimization, and managed security services.

How do you plan to support partners transitioning from traditional resale models to recurring revenue and managed security services?

India's cyber security market is shifting toward subscription-based and managed security models, especially among mid-sized enterprises facing talent shortages.

We are supporting our partners in India through:

- Flexible subscription licensing models.
- Cloud-delivered AI-powered security solutions.
- Multi-tenant management platforms designed for MSSPs.
- Incentive programs aligned with recurring revenue growth.

Managed security services are particularly relevant in India, where SMBs and regional enterprises lack in-house cyber security expertise. By delivering AI-driven monitoring, prevention-first security, and continuous Exposure Management,

partners can build sustainable, predictable revenue streams.

Which industry verticals in India currently present the biggest growth opportunities for channel partners, and why?

As India overall is growing exponentially, we see strong opportunities in:

BFSI – Driven by digital banking growth, RBI compliance, AI adoption, and fraud prevention.

Manufacturing & Industry 4.0 – Rapid digitization of OT/IoT environments increases hybrid security needs.

Healthcare – A frequent ransomware target globally including in India, according to our Check Point Research 2025 report.

IT/ITeS & Digital Services – High adoption of cloud, AI agents, and GenAI tools increases exposure risk.

Government & Public Sector – Digital public infrastructure expansion requires resilient, AI-secure frameworks.

With India's digital economy projected to reach \$1 trillion by 2030 according to MeitY estimates from their January 2025 report, "Estimation and Measurement of India's Digital Economy", cyber-

security becomes foundational to economic resilience goals into practical infrastructure outcomes.

With increasing adoption of cloud and hybrid environments, how can partners position themselves to capture emerging security opportunities?

India's data centre capacity is projected to exceed 1,800 MW by 2026 according to JLL India, driven by hyperscale cloud demand and digital infrastructure expansion, which in itself reflects hyperscale growth.

To be part of this growth, India partners should position themselves around:

- Hybrid Mesh Network Security for unified data centre and cloud protection.
- Continuous Threat Exposure Management (CTEM) to prioritize vulnerabilities and shrink remediation windows.
- AI Security solutions to secure enterprise AI applications and GenAI usage.
- Zero Trust Architecture aligned to regulatory frameworks.

By offering AI-powered, prevention-first security across hybrid environments, partners can capture high-value cloud and data centre opportunities across a hyper growing India.

How does Check Point ensure partners stay competitive against rapidly evolving cybersecurity threats and increasing vendor competition?

To access more info login to:
<https://www.smechannels.com>

WHAT CHECK POINT FOCUSES ON OVER THE NEXT 12–18 MONTHS:

- Expanding AI Security and Exposure Management certifications tailored for India & SAARC partners.
- Strengthening MSSP capabilities to address mid-market and regional enterprise demand.
- Driving adoption of our four strategic pillars — Hybrid Mesh Network Security, Workspace Security, Exposure Management, and AI Security — across verticals such as BFSI, manufacturing, healthcare, and government.



CHANDRODAYA PRASAD
Chief Product Officer at SonicWall

PROFILE

Chandrodaya Prasad serves as Chief Product Officer at SonicWall. He has over 20 years of cybersecurity product management and marketing experience, having held key leadership roles at Cisco and Viptela. Most recently, he was Vice President of Product Management at Cisco, overseeing teams delivering SASE, Cloud and Network Security and other security and networking solutions. Chandrodaya joins the SonicWall leadership team to help position our existing portfolio for success and continue our move to the cloud and expand our array of solutions.

WHY THE NEXT ENDPOINT AND SASE DISRUPTION WILL NOT COME FROM A SECURITY VENDOR

The next cybersecurity disruption may not wear a security badge. As AI agents quietly embed themselves across enterprise workflows, the author argues that they could challenge the very observation points on which endpoint and SASE security were built

Anthropic just announced Claude's expansion into security. Most of the debate is focused on the wrong question. The real issue is not what AI does in security today. It is what happens when the AI layer becomes the primary observation point and the moats that incumbents have spent years building start to erode from a direction nobody is watching.

This conversation needs to happen now across vendors, across CISOs, and across the channel. The Anthropic announcement is a useful forcing function. Not because it is a direct competitive threat today, but because it surfaces a strategic question the industry has been slow to confront.

The current positioning is centered on code analysis and developer-centric workflows. Logical starting point. But the more interesting question is not what it does today. It is where this model naturally wants to live over time.

Two areas for consideration are: Endpoint Security / EDR and SASE / SSE.

The Moat Question

For years, the hardest problem for any new security vendor was not building better detection. It was distribution. Convincing enterprises to deploy another agent. Navigating kernel-level hooks, performance tradeoffs, lengthy security review cycles, and organizational change management. The incumbents who won got there first, built deep telemetry pipelines, and made themselves operationally difficult to remove.

The moat for major cybersecurity and networking companies today is built on:

- Proprietary threat data and behavioral baselines built over years of deployment
- Distribution and Footprint Kernel-level agents and network sensors embedded through long enterprise sales cycles
- Compliance certifications including FedRAMP,

SOC 2, ITAR, and HIPAA

- Deep SIEM, SOAR, and identity integrations woven into SOC workflows
- Threat intelligence networks, ISAC relationships, and government partnerships
- Elite research teams like CrowdStrike Intelligence, Microsoft MSTIC, and Mandiant
- Channel ecosystems of MSSPs and system integrators with practices built around specific platforms
- Brand trust that drives default procurement decisions when a buyer needs to defend a purchase internally

These are genuine, hard-won advantages. But every single one depends on a shared assumption: that the incumbent remains the primary observation point.

The Door AI Native Agents Are Walking Through

AI native agents are not entering organizations the way security vendors do. They are not going through security procurement. They are arriving through productivity adoption. Developers adopt them for code generation. Teams embed them into collaboration tools, browsers, and identity flows. One can see it on their own devices already, multiple agents running across multiple workflows simultaneously.

By the time a security team begins debating enforcement authority, the contextual footprint is already established. The agent already touches identity, sessions, developer pipelines, documents, and behavioral patterns across applications.

The Endpoint and EDR Dimension

The nature of that visibility is fundamentally different from what traditional EDR provides. A kernel-level agent sees processes, memory allocations, and system calls. An AI layer embedded in workflow sees intent. Intent expressed in prompts. Intent reflected in code generation patterns. Intent visible



in how data is accessed across applications over time. That is a qualitatively richer behavioral signal than raw execution telemetry, built passively, without a single security-specific deployment motion.

The SASE and SSE Dimension

The network edge - Firewall or an SSE stack was never the point. It was always a proxy. Security vendors anchored enforcement at the edge because that was where they could observe user behavior consistently. Inline inspection, DNS filtering, browser isolation, and zero trust network access are all fundamentally about visibility into what users are doing and enforcing policy based on that visibility.

If the primary interaction surface increasingly becomes an AI layer, the edge proxy becomes redundant. Or does it just become the transport? The AI layer already has richer visibility into user intent than any inline network inspection point can provide. Enforcement follows observation. If the better observation point is upstream, that is where policy enforcement will eventually migrate as well.

The pertinent question If AI agents are operating today as a wrapper on top of enterprise security infrastructure, and continuously learning

from the data those incumbent systems generate, what guardrails prevent them from absorbing that institutional knowledge into their own models over time? What stops an AI layer from learning the detection logic, the behavioral baselines, the correlation patterns, and eventually replicating that capability more efficiently within its own architecture?

This is not a theoretical concern. It is a natural consequence of how these models learn. The incumbent provides the signal. The AI layer ingests it, contextualizes it, and improves on it. At some point the question becomes whether the original signal source remains necessary. I do not think the incumbents have a good answer to this yet.

Are These Moats Equally Durable?

Not all of these moats will hold equally well through platform transition.

- Compliance certifications, channel relationships, and deep telemetry pipelines are the stickiest.
- Regulated industries will not move quickly, and that buys meaningful time.
- Brand trust and integration ecosystems are real today but erode faster than people expect

when a superior observation point emerges upstream.

- Distribution footprint is the most interesting case. Historically the hardest moat to construct and the primary reason endpoint security has been so difficult to disrupt. But AI native agents circumvent the distribution problem entirely. They do not need a procurement decision. They arrive through a different motion and build visibility organically. The moat that was hardest to attack is getting easier to walk around.

We have seen this before in networking, storage, and productivity software. The friction points are real. Regulated industries will resist granting enforcement authority to AI. The liability question when an AI agent makes a wrong access decision is genuinely unresolved. These constraints change the timeline, not the destination.

The Real Disruption Scenario

A straightforward situation would involve an AI company choosing to enter the security market as a competitor. Such an approach would be gradual, transparent, and easily addressed by existing participants.

The scenario that should be of concern is more subtle. Control reorganizes around the AI inter-



action surface gradually, driven by productivity adoption rather than security strategy. By the time the shift is visible in win-loss data and renewal conversations, the switching cost calculus has already changed. The AI layer has become load-bearing infrastructure.

Decision Makers Shift Too

It is not just the technology that shifts. Security buying decisions that today sit with CISOs, and security operations teams may increasingly involve the same business leaders driving AI and productivity adoption. That changes the sales motion, the competitive dynamic, and the vendor relationships that matter most. Whoever owns the AI conversation with the business owns the next security conversation as well.

The Platform Rethink Nobody Wants to Have

These traditional platforms are being built with a

view of the world where security means a perimeter, an agent, a sensor, an enforcement point sitting between the user and the resource. If the AI layer becomes the primary interaction surface, then architecture needs to be reconceived from the ground up. Not as enforcement points sitting around the edge of user behavior, but as an intelligence fabric operating within the workflow, at the data layer, and inside the AI interaction itself.

This would require different engineering, different go-to-market, and a willingness to cannibalize products that are still generating revenue today. The hardest part is always that last one.

The companies that have navigated platform transitions well did not defend the old architecture while slowly building the new one. They made a deliberate choice about which future they were building for. The ones that hedged too long found themselves competitive in neither.

So, What Do Vendors Actually Do

About It?

Every major security vendor is now developing their own approach. Strategic options are clearer, with three top choices emerging:

- First, move up the stack into AI security itself. AI agents are a rapidly expanding attack surface. Prompt injection, model poisoning, agentic workflow abuse, and data exfiltration through AI pipelines are real and emerging threat vectors. Security vendors who pivot to securing the AI layer find a new growth market that plays directly to their existing strengths.
- Second, become the enforcement layer inside AI workflows rather than sitting outside them. AI platforms will need trusted security enforcement embedded within them and will prefer to partner rather than build. Vendors who position early as the policy and enforcement layer inside AI workflows retain relevance at the new control point.
- Third, accelerate platform convergence. Point products are the most vulnerable to AI disruption because they are easy to replicate as a feature of a broader AI layer. Vendors who converge capabilities across endpoint, network, identity, and cloud create switching costs that are structurally harder to circumvent.

Embedding into the AI stack through APIs is inevitable for everyone but carries margin risk and erodes the direct customer relationship. It is a hedge, not a strategy on its own. The vendors who combine all three simultaneously are the ones most likely to be relevant in five years.

Ongoing Developments: Current Perspective

At present, let's acknowledge that definitive conclusions remain elusive, as we continue to assess the outcomes and implications of ongoing changes, our perspectives are likely to evolve further, given the rapid progression of the AI landscape.

The vendors asking these questions now will be better positioned than those who are not. The ones who wait for the disruption to become obvious will find the switching cost calculus has already moved against them.. **SME**

AI native agents are not entering organizations the way security vendors do. They are not going through security procurement but through productivity adoption.



CODE, COURAGE AND CHANGE: THE RISE OF WOMEN IN IT

As the world celebrates International Women's Day, the remarkable journey of women in the tech sector stands as a saga of talent, tenacity and transformation. From breaking glass ceilings to building the technologies of tomorrow, women leaders are reshaping the global IT industry—overcoming barriers, inspiring the next generation, and redefining what leadership in technology looks like.

BY MANASH RANJAN DEBATA
manash@accentinfomedia.com

The International Women's Day on 8th March is a momentous occasion and a reminder to commemorate the immense contributions of women to our society. The day also marks a call to action for celebrating women's achievements, raising awareness about women's status and accelerating gender parity.

The last two decades have witnessed women making remarkable strides in the technology sector. Increasing access to STEM education, progressive workplace policies, and visible female role

models have encouraged more women to pursue careers in IT, which was once considered a male bastion.

However, despite all the buzz surrounding women's empowerment and conversations on gender diversity in tech, women are still under-represented and often discriminated against in the tech industry, if we go by the numbers. But the silver-lining in the cloud has been the recent strides taken by the fair sex in various walks of life, including the Channel Business in IT industry.

In commemoration of the International Women's Day and in celebration of and gratitude to Women's Power, we have embarked upon cataloguing the achievements and voices of leading Women IT Leaders in the tech industry.

Wide Leadership Gap

Industry reports show that women in tech are increasingly empowered in terms of skills, adoption of emerging technologies, and workforce participation. However, the sector still faces a



JILL MACMURCHY
Chief Customer Officer, APAC,
Commvault

"EQUITY IS NOT A MILESTONE TO BE REACHED, BUT A DISCIPLINE TO BE PRACTICED, WHICH IS THEN SUSTAINED THROUGH CONSISTENT, INTENTIONAL ACTION AT EVERY LEVEL OF LEADERSHIP."

significant gender gap—especially in leadership roles and core engineering positions. Progress is real but gradual.

The tech sector is still struggling to bridge the huge hiatus in leadership roles. But recent growth in women's share in senior leadership roles brings in smiles for the tech sector, as this can positively impact female employee engagement and retention. According to a recent IDC finding, the percentage of women in senior leadership positions grew from 21% to 24% between 2024 and 2025. Organizations with women in 50% or more in senior leadership positions are more likely to offer equal pay. Female employees are more likely to stay with the organisation longer than a year; they also report higher job satisfaction, and believe that the company is trustworthy.

"Companies in the top quartile for gender diversity are about 25% more likely to outperform on profitability, and diverse executive teams consistently show stronger innovation outcomes. This is not optics; it is operating leverage. In the AI era, leading with technology means owning both the architecture and the accountability, and women are doing exactly that," says Runki Goswami, CMO, Newgen Software.

Despite the happy numbers, women still feel



SUVARNA NIKAM
Global HR Head, Visionet Systems

"ORGANIZATIONS THAT TRULY SUCCEED IN ADVANCING WOMEN DO NOT RELY ON POLICY ALONE—THEY BUILD CULTURES OF COLLABORATION, GENEROSITY, AND SHARED LEARNING."

less enthusiastic about senior leadership prospects than men. The IDC report found that while senior management roles (24%) are increasing, representation at the CEO and C-suite levels remains lower, often hovering around 8-19% depending on the specific region and industry.

Diversity in Workforce Critical to Tech Industry

Diversity in workforce has been proved critical in tech industry, as it enables companies to create better and safer products, taking into consideration every section of the society. According to a McKinsey report, diverse companies perform better, hire better talent, have more engaged employees, and retain workers better than companies that do not focus on diversity and inclusion. However, women still remain widely underrepresented in IT roles.

"The technology sector carries a distinct responsibility. Representation gaps at senior and technical levels persist and disrupting that pattern demands more than just intent. It requires leaders who sponsor talent boldly, advocate publicly, and measure their own success by the progress of those they elevate," affirms Jill Macmurchy, Chief Customer Officer, APAC, Commvault.

She further adds, "DE&I cannot function as



RUNKI GOSWAMI
CMO, Newgen Software

"AS ORGANIZATIONS SPRINT TOWARD AI-LED MODELS, WOMEN LEADERS ARE NOT JUST PARTICIPATING IN THE SHIFT, THEY ARE CODING ITS GUARDRAILS AND STEERING ITS SCALE."

a parallel programme running alongside the core business. Organizations that embed it into their talent strategy, succession planning, and leadership evaluation will see the return. At Commvault, our DEI approach focuses on incorporating diverse, inclusive, and equitable practices throughout the organization to deliver our commitment of cultivating a culture of innovation and belonging."

"At ManageEngine, empowering women is not a one-day conversation. It is about ensuring access to meaningful roles, leadership pathways, and the confidence to take on larger responsibilities. When organizations consciously create that space, the impact shows up in stronger teams, better ideas, and more resilient businesses. Progress is cumulative. The more we enable each other to succeed, the more we all move forward, and that is a future worth building together," says Deepa Kuppuswamy, Director of Security, ManageEngine, Zoho Corp.

Statistics from the various important facets of IT work, ranging from higher education to workplace environment, paint a clear picture of the challenges women face in finding equal footing in a career in IT.

"Many women enter the workforce with strong capability and ambition. Yet over time,

**DEEPA KUPPUSWAMY**

Director of Security, ManageEngine,
Zoho Corp

"PROGRESS IS CUMULATIVE. THE MORE WE ENABLE EACH OTHER TO SUCCEED, THE MORE WE ALL MOVE FORWARD, AND THAT IS A FUTURE WORTH BUILDING TOGETHER."

systemic challenges begin to compound. Tough customer environments, unclear expectations, constant ambiguity, and the pressure to balance work with caregiving or motherhood often cause mid-to-senior-career women to pause, step back, or exit altogether," says Suvarna Nikam, Global HR Head, Visionet Systems. "Breaking this cycle requires more than individual resilience from women—it requires an intentional relook at organizational design and how leaders share knowledge and opportunity."

India, in particular, has emerged as one of the strongest contributors to female participation in technology. The Indian IT sector today employs more than two million women, representing about 36% of the total workforce. This growth reflects a significant shift from a decade ago, when women accounted for only around 30% of the IT workforce.

Globally, women are increasingly contributing to critical technology domains such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, cloud computing, data science, and software engineering. Emerging digital technologies are opening new opportunities for women to lead innovation across industries. "As organizations sprint toward AI-led models, women leaders are not just participating in the shift, they are coding its guardrails and steering its scale," says Runki.

**VIRGINIA GALARÓN**

Customer Advocate Director at New
Relic

"INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY IS A STRONG REMINDER THAT PROGRESS IN INDIA'S TECHNOLOGY LANDSCAPE IS BUILT ON MUTUAL SUPPORT AND SHARED INVESTMENT IN ONE ANOTHER'S SUCCESS."

However, the journey toward equality in technology leadership is still evolving. While women represent a substantial portion of the workforce, their presence in executive leadership roles remains comparatively limited.

The progress achieved so far highlights both the resilience of women in IT and the potential for even greater transformation in the years ahead.

Breaking Barriers, Overcoming Challenges

Women leaders in technology have often had to navigate a challenging path to success. For many decades, engineering and computer science were seen as male-dominated disciplines. Women entering these fields frequently faced skepticism about their technical abilities or leadership potential.

Despite these barriers, countless women have risen through the ranks by demonstrating exceptional expertise, leadership skills, and perseverance.

Many women leaders recount stories of being the only female engineer in their teams or the only woman in executive meetings. Instead of allowing these circumstances to limit them, they used them as motivation to prove their capabilities.

**JYOLSNA ELANGO**

Vice President of Engineering- Head
of Applications, Data Science & Gen AI
Portfolio, Securonix

"AS THE TECHNOLOGY INDUSTRY EVOLVES, WOMEN CONTINUE TO TURN SYSTEMIC CHALLENGES INTO CATALYSTS FOR GROWTH, CONTRIBUTING DIVERSE VIEWPOINTS THAT ELEVATE PROBLEM-SOLVING AND FUEL INNOVATION."

"The 'give to gain' mindset is essential to plugging this gap. When we invest in one another through time, mentorship, advocacy, education or simply visibility, we create more opportunity for everyone. When women thrive, industries grow stronger, innovation accelerates and communities become more resilient," advocates Virginia Galarón, Customer Advocate Director at New Relic.

"In technology, one of the most powerful ways we can give is through impact. The work we do must solve real problems for customers, teams and the broader industry. In my day-to-day work, I see firsthand how careers flourish when professionals shift from completing tasks to creating sustained value. When we give our curiosity, our attention, and our commitment to understanding why the work matters, we build the route that allows women to move from entry-level roles to the C-suite, where they currently hold only 14% of positions. That mindset not only strengthens organisations, it creates pathways for others to follow," she adds.

Today, women are leading digital transforma-

**VINNY SHARMA**

Senior Director - Global, Field & Channel Marketing, Securonix

"AS A WOMAN IN MARKETING WITHIN CYBERSECURITY, I'VE LEARNED THAT LEADERSHIP ISN'T ABOUT HAVING THE LOUDEST VOICE IN THE ROOM. IT'S ABOUT LISTENING, ASKING THOUGHTFUL QUESTIONS, AND CREATING SPACE FOR COLLABORATION."

tion initiatives, managing billion-dollar technology portfolios, and driving innovations in AI, cloud computing, and cybersecurity.

Their success has reshaped perceptions of leadership in technology and opened the door for a new generation of female technologists.

Inspiring the Next-Gen Women Tech Leaders

The visibility of successful women leaders is encouraging more young women to pursue careers in technology.

Educational institutions, technology companies, and professional organizations are increasingly launching initiatives aimed at promoting female participation in STEM.

Scholarships, coding boot camps, mentorship programs, and women-focused technology communities are helping bridge the gender gap.

Young women entering the workforce now have access to mentors and role models who can guide them through the challenges of building successful technology careers.

Representation matters. When students see women leading global technology companies,

**SAVITHA BM**

Senior Firmware Project Manager at Lenovo

"MOVING ACROSS ROLES, FROM DEVELOPER TO VALIDATION AND LATER TO AN ENGINEERING MANAGEMENT ROLE, HELPED ME BUILD BOTH TECHNICAL AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS."

they are more likely to envision themselves in similar roles.

Challenges Continue, So also the Grit

Despite significant progress, several challenges remain.

Women still face disparities in leadership representation and career advancement opportunities. Studies show that while women form a significant portion of the technology workforce, they remain underrepresented in decision-making roles.

Jyolsna Elangovan- Vice President of Engineering- Head of Applications, Data Science & Gen AI Portfolio, Securonix, says, "Today, although in smaller numbers than their male counterparts, women leaders in technology and engineering are driving strategic AI programs across cybersecurity innovation and enterprise modernization with both passion and precision. As the technology industry evolves, women continue to turn systemic challenges into catalysts for growth, contributing diverse viewpoints that elevate problem-solving and fuel innovation."

"As Vice President of Engineering overseeing Applications, Data Science, and GenAI, I believe women leaders are redefining what excellence looks like, raising the bar on innovation, empow-

**RIDHIMA SAWANT**

Chief Transformation Officer, Orient Technologies Limited

"STRUCTURED MENTORSHIP AND GUIDANCE ARE ESPECIALLY CRITICAL FOR WOMEN RETURNING TO WORK, ENABLING RENEWED CONFIDENCE, CAPABILITY AND CAREER CONTINUITY."

ering teams, and building high-performance cultures where impact, resilience, and balance drive sustainable success," adds Jyolsna.

"Perseverance, continuous learning, staying current with market needs, and having a growth mindset are crucial for any engineer. Be ready to take stretch assignments and come out of your comfort zone. These are especially important for women engineers to excel in the ever-evolving technology landscape," says Savitha BM, Senior Firmware Project Manager at Lenovo.

"In my own journey, I have learned that no matter what role we play, the impact we create in the results speaks for us. Moving across roles, from developer to validation and later to an engineering management role, helped me build both technical and leadership skills," informs Savitha. Another challenge is the persistent gender pay gap and limited access to funding for women-led startups. In India's startup ecosystem, women-led ventures receive only ₹4 out of every ₹100 raised by founders, highlighting funding disparities. Unconscious bias, limited mentorship opportunities, and workplace culture issues also affect career progression.

Addressing these challenges requires long-term structural change in corporate policies, leadership

**JANAKI YARLAGADDA**

Chairman, Blue Cloud Softech Solutions Limited

"WHEN WOMEN BUILD AND LEAD COMPANIES, THEY CREATE ECOSYSTEMS THAT EXPAND OPPORTUNITY, EMBED ACCOUNTABILITY AND CULTIVATE TRUST. THE FUTURE OF WORK WILL BE DEFINED BY INSTITUTIONS DESIGNED BY LEADERS WHO ENABLE OTHERS TO RISE."

development programs, and hiring practices.

Magic Tango of Career Growth and Personal Life

Technology careers often demand long working hours, rapid skill upgrades, and global collaboration across time zones.

For many women, balancing professional responsibilities with personal commitments can be challenging.

However, the rise of hybrid work models and remote work has created more flexibility in the workplace. Companies are increasingly introducing family-friendly policies such as flexible schedules, parental leave, and childcare support.

Women leaders themselves are advocating for workplace cultures that prioritize well-being, mental health, and work-life balance.

By encouraging flexible work environments, organizations can retain talented women and ensure sustainable career growth.

A New Era of Inclusive Innovation

The future of women in technology looks

**APARNA BALASUBRAMANIAN**

Senior Director of Software Engineering at GoTo

"THIS INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY, WE REAFFIRM OUR COMMITMENT TO KEEPING TALENT AT THE CENTRE OF PROGRESS—BECAUSE THE FUTURE WE ENGINEER WILL BE DEFINED NOT ONLY BY MODELS, BUT BY THE VALUES AND INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP BEHIND THEM."

increasingly promising.

The rapid expansion of digital transformation across industries is creating unprecedented demand for skilled professionals. Women are increasingly entering emerging technology domains and taking leadership roles in innovation.

"At GoTo, we are building an inclusive environment where empathetic leadership and diverse perspectives drive the next wave of enterprise solutions. True innovation demands more than technical depth; it requires a culture where talent, stewardship, and collaboration create meaningful impact. It is about influence—ensuring diverse thinkers are architecting scalable systems, advancing AI-led automation, and strengthening cybersecurity," says Aparna Balasubramanian, Senior Director of Software Engineering at GoTo.

"As a woman in marketing within cybersecurity, I've learned that leadership isn't about having the loudest voice in the room. It's about listening, asking thoughtful questions, and creating space for collaboration. It's about translating complexity

into clarity and helping others move forward with confidence," says Vinny Sharma, Senior Director - Global, Field & Channel Marketing, Securonix.

"Over the years," Vinny further reflects, "I've realized that empathy, adaptability, and resilience - qualities many women naturally bring to leadership - are powerful strengths in this industry. They allow us to bridge gaps between technical teams and business leaders, between strategy and execution, and between challenge and opportunity."

Governments, universities, and technology companies are recognizing that diversity is essential for innovation. Inclusive workplaces foster creativity, better decision-making, and stronger organizational performance.

As more women step into leadership positions, they are also reshaping workplace cultures—promoting collaboration, empathy, and diversity. The next decade could witness a significant rise in women-led technology startups, research breakthroughs, and executive leadership roles.

The Future Is Inclusive

The rise of women in IT represents one of the most important transformations in the global technology industry.

"Inclusion must be powered by capability building, not just campaigns, with focused reskilling in high-growth areas such as AI, cloud and cybersecurity. Through our 2nd Inning program, we are committed to building clear pathways for women to return, upskill and lead in the decade ahead," says Ridhima Sawant, Chief Transformation Officer, Orient Technologies Limited.

From coding the software that powers the digital economy to leading multinational technology companies, women are playing a critical role in shaping the future of innovation.

While challenges remain, the progress achieved over the past decade is remarkable. Increasing participation, stronger mentorship networks, and supportive workplace policies are paving the way for greater equality in technology.

As the world celebrates International Women's Day, the message is clear: empowering women in technology is not just a matter of fairness—it is a strategic necessity for innovation and economic growth.

At Happiest Minds, we believe inclusive innovation is essential to building responsible, future ready digital solutions in the age of AI and emerging technologies," says Preeti Menon, Chief Operating Officer - Product & Digital Engineering Services, Happiest Minds Technologies.

The digital revolution is accelerating, and women are no longer just participants in this transformation.

They are leading it. **SME**

**ARUN JAIN**

CHAIRMAN AND MANAGING DIRECTOR OF INTELLECT DESIGN ARENA AND CHIEF ARCHITECT OF PURPLE FABRIC

"PURPLE FABRIC IS ENGINEERED AS CERTIFIED, GOVERNANCE-READY INFRASTRUCTURE WHERE RELIABILITY, AUDITABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY ARE BUILT INTO THE ARCHITECTURE, NOT ADDED AFTERWARD. THIS ALLOWS INSTITUTIONS TO DEPLOY AI WITH CONFIDENCE ACROSS FINANCE, HEALTHCARE, GOVERNANCE AND OTHER MISSION-CRITICAL DOMAINS WHERE CONSEQUENCE MATTERS. THE FUTURE OF ENTERPRISE AI WILL BELONG TO PLATFORMS THAT ORGANISATIONS CAN RELY ON EVERY DAY, NOT JUST TO GENERATE ANSWERS, BUT TO SUPPORT ACCOUNTABLE DECISIONS."

INTELLECT MAKES A THUD WITH PURPLE FABRIC, ITS UNIQUE JUDGMENT-CENTRIC OPEN BUSINESS IMPACT AI PLATFORM

Challenging high-cost global probabilistic AI enterprise platforms, Intellect democratises AI for large-scale adoption

Intellect Design Arena Ltd., a global leader in AI-First, enterprise-grade financial technology, today announced that Purple Fabric, India's Judgment-Centric full-stack Open Business Impact AI platform, is now available as an Enterprise AI on Tap at ₹99,500 per month, enabling up to 50 users to deploy and scale Business Impact AI without the traditional infrastructure burden. The move positions reliability-first artificial intelligence as certified, trustworthy, governance-ready institutional infrastructure.

Conceptualised and engineered in India since 2016 by Intellect's dedicated Enterprise AI Research Program, Purple Fabric represents a structural shift in how institutions adopt artificial intelligence. Made in India for the global world, the platform positions our country not merely as a consumer of AI technology, but as a creator of trustworthy enterprise AI infrastructure. Designed for mid-market enterprises, financial institutions, IT services firms, academic

ecosystems and government environments, Purple Fabric enables organisations to deploy consequence-aware AI without building large internal AI departments or committing to capital-intensive infrastructure projects.

"AI capability is no longer the constraint; reliability is," said Arun Jain, Chairman and Managing Director of Intellect Design Arena and Chief Architect of Purple Fabric. "Enterprises do not hesitate because AI is weak; they hesitate because AI must earn the right to act. Purple Fabric is built around that principle. Organisations are moving beyond experimentation - they now need judgment-centric, trustworthy AI that is safe enough to trust with real decisions. Purple Fabric is engineered as certified, governance-ready infrastructure where reliability, auditability and transparency are built into the architecture, not added afterward. This allows institutions to deploy AI with confidence across finance, healthcare, governance and other mission-critical domains where

consequence matters. The future of enterprise AI will belong to platforms that organisations can rely on every day, not just to generate answers, but to support accountable decisions."

AI as Institutional Infrastructure

Purple Fabric transforms AI from experimental capability into institutional infrastructure. While global AI adoption has expanded rapidly, enterprises continue to encounter reliability plateaus, governance gaps and unpredictable costs when AI is applied to real-world regulated workflows. Most probabilistic AI systems optimise for speed and fluency, yet enterprises operate in environments where decisions carry regulatory, financial and societal consequences.

Purple Fabric introduces a judgment-centric architecture that enforces deterministic enterprise knowledge governance, context-bound reasoning, measurable reliability thresholds and full decision auditability. Under structured



From left to right, Hitesh K Arora, EVP & Business Head at Intellect Design Arena Ltd, Arun Jain, Chairman and Managing Director of Intellect Design Arena and Chief Architect of Purple Fabric, Deepak Dastrala, Chief Technology Officer at Intellect Design Arena Ltd at the announcement of Purple Fabric, a Judgment-Centric full-stack Open Business Impact AI platform at Hotel Lalit, New Delhi

deployment models, the platform demonstrates reliability aligned with institutional expectations, enabling AI adoption in finance, procurement, compliance, governance and other high-consequence environments. The shift is architectural rather than incremental: AI moves from assistance to accountable infrastructure.

Enterprise-Grade AI at a Disruptive Cost

Purple Fabric is positioned to make enterprise-grade AI infrastructure accessible to mid-sized and large organisations at a disruptive cost of ₹99,500 per month. The pricing model reflects a shift away from capital-intensive AI deployments toward operational infrastructure that enterprises can adopt without multi-crore upfront investment.

At less than the monthly cost of an experienced IT engineer or architect, organisations gain access to a full-stack AI reliability architecture that would traditionally require dedicated research teams, bespoke integration programs and significant infrastructure overhead.

Under this model, organisations can:

- Deploy structured AI governance without a large upfront investment
- Integrate with existing AI and enterprise systems
- Scale reliability controls across departments
- Improve auditability and compliance readiness
- Standardise AI decision frameworks across business units
- Reduce operational risk associated with probabilistic automation

The result is a shift from ad hoc AI experi-

mentation toward institution-grade deployment, where cost predictability aligns with governance discipline.

Structural Shift in Enterprise AI Access

Purple Fabric represents a deliberate disruption of the dominance emerging in global enterprise AI capability. Production-grade AI infrastructure has increasingly consolidated around high-cost platforms, restricting advanced AI deployment to a narrow tier of organisations.

Purple Fabric introduces an alternative architecture: governed, production-grade AI delivered as shared infrastructure rather than exclusive engineering privilege. Enterprises gain independence, cost predictability and operational discipline while retaining full ownership of institutional knowledge.

Designed using First Principles Thinking and Design Thinking, Purple Fabric converts AI capability into consequence. Business-grade accuracy, auditability and institutional trust are embedded at the system level rather than layered afterward.

The platform is delivered through four tightly integrated technology stacks: Enterprise Knowledge Garden (EKG) Designer, Digital Expert Designer, LLM Benchmarking and Optimisation, Certified Enterprise Governance.

Secure Enterprise Knowledge Ownership

At the core of Purple Fabric is the Enterprise Knowledge Garden, a private intelligence fabric ensuring organisations retain full ownership of

institutional knowledge. Unlike public AI systems that rely on uncontrolled probabilistic data pools, Purple Fabric operates on curated enterprise knowledge frames and deterministic knowledge grids.

This architecture protects proprietary intelligence, enforces entitlement controls and guarantees that AI reasoning remains auditable and policy-aligned. Enterprises scale intelligence without surrendering knowledge control.

Purple Fabric integrates seamlessly with Google Workspace, Microsoft 365, enterprise databases and national digital infrastructure. The platform includes WhatsApp enterprise integration and enterprise connector kits.

Purple Fabric is backed by Intellect's ISO/IEC 42001 certification, the global standard for AI Management Systems, validating its deterministic trust architecture built on governance, transparency and operational resilience.

The Purple Fabric Cloud is built on a five-layer security architecture, ISO-certified infrastructure and SOC 2 compliance. It aligns with RBI, UK, US, Canada and EU AI policy frameworks, designed for deployment in regulated institutional environments.

Sector Transformation Through Governed AI

Purple Fabric serves as a unified intelligence infrastructure layer across industries where consequence, trust and governance define institutional success in sectors such as Financial Institutions and Insurance companies, Corporate Enterprises, Mid-Size IT Services Firms, Government and Regulators, Academic and Education Institutions, Legal and Audit Firms.

Across sectors, Purple Fabric functions as governed institutional intelligence - converting AI from experimental automation into accountable infrastructure.

Purple Fabric Academy and Enterprise Rollout

Enterprise rollout is reinforced by the Purple Fabric Academy, an established capability ecosystem that enables organisations to operationalise governed AI through structured training and certification. The Academy supports leadership teams, architects and enterprise practitioners in designing secure knowledge frameworks, orchestrating multi-agent systems and implementing accountable AI governance at scale. Through ongoing boot camps, advanced certification programs and guided enterprise workshops, organ-

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INDIA LEADS ASIA'S AI SURGE AS ENTERPRISES SHIFT FROM EXPERIMENTATION TO EXECUTION: LENOVO CIO PLAYBOOK 2026

Indian enterprises are doubling down on AI, with 99% planning increased investments and budgets set to grow 19% year-on-year—the fastest in Asia Pacific. As AI moves from pilot projects to core strategy, CIOs are now focused on scaling outcomes, embedding intelligence across infrastructure, operations, and enterprise workflows

Enterprises across Asia Pacific are accelerating their shift from AI experimentation to execution, with 96% of organizations planning to increase AI investments over the next 12 months, according to the 4th edition of the Lenovo CIO Playbook 2026 - The Race for Enterprise AI, commissioned by Lenovo with insights from IDC. On average, organizations expect AI spending to grow by 15%, spanning GenAI and Agentic AI, public cloud AI services, on-prem AI infrastructure, and AI security tools.

India Stands out

India stands out in AP, with 99% of organizations planning to increase AI investments over the next 12 months and the highest average year-on-year budget growth in the region at 19%. These investments prioritize deploying and supporting AI infrastructure, internal AI training including non-IT staff, and generative AI development and applications, followed by AI devices and AI security, trust and transparency tools - underscoring AI as a core enabler of enterprise efficiency, resilience, and growth.

AI Decisions @ Core of Enterprise Strategy

"When 96% of organizations across AP are planning a 15% on average increase in AI investment, it tells us that AI decisions are now being made at the core of enterprise strategy," said Sumir Bhatia, President, Asia Pacific, ISG, Lenovo. "The differentiator will be how effectively organizations integrate AI, embedding it into infrastructure, operations, and security so value compounds over time."

As AI becomes increasingly embedded into enterprise strategy, driving revenue growth, improving profitability, and enhancing business & customer experience have emerged as the top



FAN HO

ED & GM, ASIA PACIFIC, SOLUTIONS & SERVICES GROUP, LENOVO

"WITH NEARLY 60% OF ORGANIZATIONS ALREADY EXPLORING AGENTIC AI AND THE MAJORITY ARE CHOOSING A MEASURED PATH TO SCALE, IT REFLECTS THAT ENTERPRISES WANT AI THAT OPERATES WITHIN CORE WORKFLOWS, MEETS SECURITY AND GOVERNANCE EXPECTATIONS, AND DELIVERS CONSISTENT OUTCOMES."

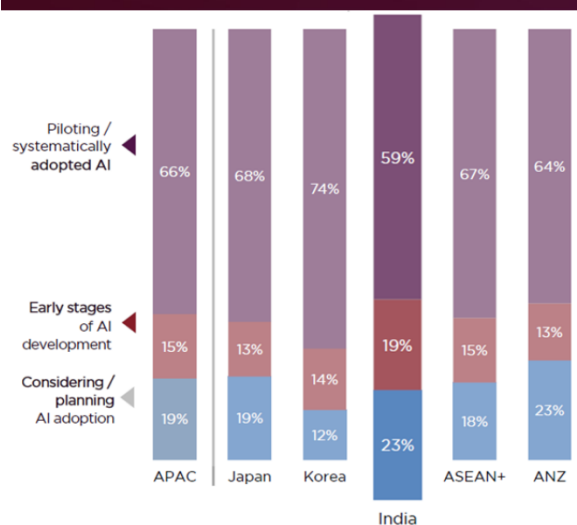
three business priorities for CIOs in Asia Pacific.

From ROI Validation to Outcomes-Led

AI

Building on last year's AI-nomics focus on validating returns and business cases, the 2026 Playbook

2026 AI Investments Priorities in India



99%

Will increase AI investment

+19%

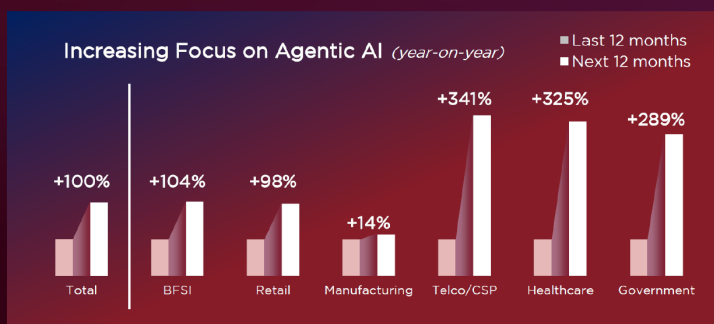
Average AI Investment increment

AI Infrastructure

#1 AI Investment Priority

COURTESY: Lenovo

Agentic AI interest growing across Industries



COURTESY: Lenovo

CIO IMPERATIVES FOR 2026

The Lenovo CIO Playbook 2026 highlights three priorities shaping the year ahead:

1. AI inferencing becomes the value engine – Over a model's lifecycle, inferencing costs can be up to 15 times higher than training. By 2030, 75% of AI compute will be dedicated to inferencing, with 80% of enterprises relying on distributed edge infrastructure.

2. Employee productivity rises as a strategic priority – Deploying AI devices to enhance productivity & local inferencing has climbed to the #2 IT Investment priority, alongside growing adoption of AI PCs, with 50% of enterprise PC purchases expected to shift to models with on-device AI agents.

3. Scaling AI remains the defining challenge – While 88% of organizations expect positive ROI, only around half of AI proof-of-concepts reach production, making scale - not ambition - the critical gap.



SHAILENDRA KATYAL
VICE PRESIDENT AND MANAGING
DIRECTOR, LENOVO INDIA

"INDIA'S AI JOURNEY REFLECTS A BUILDER MINDSET. AS 59% OF ORGANIZATIONS MOVE INTO ACTIVE ADOPTION AND BUDGETS GROW AT THE FASTEST PACE IN THE REGION, ENTERPRISES ARE PRIORITIZING INFRASTRUCTURE AND WORKFORCE READINESS TO INDUSTRIALIZE AI RESPONSIBLY AND AT SCALE."

highlights a decisive shift toward outcomes-led AI adoption. CIOs remain confident in AI's value, but are applying greater rigor to ensure investments translate into sustained impact.

88% of AP organizations expect a positive ROI from AI in 2026, with an average anticipated return of 2.8x (US\$2.85 for every US\$1 invested). Yet, scaling AI beyond pilots remains a key challenge, reinforcing the importance of governance, operating models, and lifecycle management.

AI Adoption Expands Beyond IT

AI adoption across Asia Pacific continues to accelerate and is no longer confined to IT. 66% of organizations are already piloting or system-

AI Inferencing is unleashing the power of businesses

15x Over a model's lifetime, inferencing costs up to 15 times more than training

75% of all AI compute resources will be AI inference by 2030

80% enterprises will deploy distributed edge infrastructure for AI inferencing, according to IDC predictions



CIO Imperative #1

Become orchestrators of AI. Balance performance, cost, security and governance, without compromising scale

COURTESY: Lenovo



SUMIR BHATIA
PRESIDENT, ASIA PACIFIC, ISG,
LENOVO

End User Devices are becoming active AI execution layers

#2 Deploying AI Devices to enhance productivity & local inferencing as an IT investment priority.

50% Enterprise PC purchase will shift to models with on-device AI agents



CIO Imperative #2

CIOs must plan for seamless integration of AI into end-devices, while navigating multiple AI, AI bubbles and lack of continuity.

COURTESY: Lenovo

"WHEN 96% OF ORGANIZATIONS ACROSS AP ARE PLANNING A 15% ON AVERAGE INCREASE IN AI INVESTMENT, IT TELLS US THAT AI DECISIONS ARE NOW BEING MADE AT THE CORE OF ENTERPRISE STRATEGY. THE DIFFERENTIATOR WILL BE HOW EFFECTIVELY ORGANIZATIONS INTEGRATE AI, EMBEDDING IT INTO INFRASTRUCTURE, OPERATIONS, AND SECURITY SO VALUE COMPOUNDS OVER TIME."

Scaling with Speed and Purpose

88% Expect positive ROI from AI investments

50% AI POCs transition into production

Key Challenges to AI Scale

Skills Availability

Integration

Moving beyond isolated pilots



CIO Imperative #3

Deliver value of AI to the boardroom with speed, agility and business outcomes

COURTESY: Lenovo

atically adopting AI, while 15% remain in early stages and 19% are considering adoption.

In India, 59% are already piloting or systematically adopting AI, with 19% in early stages and 23% considering adoption, highlighting sustained interest and a strong pipeline for broader deployment.

AI is increasingly being deployed across customer service, marketing, operations, finance, and industry-specific lines of business, reshaping how enterprises operate and compete. Notably, half of

surveyed organizations report that non-IT departments are now funding AI initiatives, elevating the CIO's role as an enterprise-wide orchestrator.

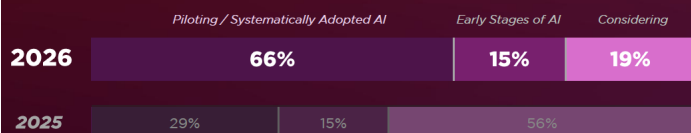
Agentic AI Emerges as the Next Enterprise Opportunity

Interest in Agentic AI is expected to double over the next 12 months. Today, 21% of Asia Pacific organizations report significant usage, 59% are exploring or planning limited deployments, particularly across telecommunications, healthcare,

and government, where operational complexity and scale are highest.

Despite growing interest, readiness remains uneven. Only 10% of organizations consider themselves ready for scaled Agentic AI implementation, with 41% requiring more than 12 months to meaningfully scale. Security, governance, data quality, and integration complexity remain key barriers.

AI Adoption



Top AI Adoption by Business Area



COURTESY: Lenovo

Agentic AI Interest In India

+139%

Increased focus on Agentic AI

35%

Need more than 12 months to be ready

Indian CIOs recognize that agentic scale without sovereign infrastructure creates **exposure before advantage**.



COURTESY: Lenovo

Agentic AI Interest In India

+139%

Increased focus on Agentic AI

35%

Need more than 12 months to be ready

Indian CIOs recognize that agentic scale without sovereign infrastructure creates **exposure before advantage**.



COURTESY: Lenovo

Critical Success Factors to Scaling AI

COURTESY: Lenovo



Skills & Operating Models



Infrastructure, Edge & Devices Strategy



Effective Human-AI Collaboration



Secure Data access across environments

86%

Prefer Primary AI Workloads on **Hybrid Environments**

#2

IT Investment Priority: **Deploying AI Devices to enhance productivity and local inferencing**

"Agentic AI represents a fundamental shift in how intelligence is embedded into the enterprise," said Fan Ho, ED & GM, Asia Pacific, Solutions & Services Group, Lenovo. "With nearly 60% of organizations already exploring Agentic AI and the majority are choosing a measured path to scale, it reflects that enterprises want AI that operates within core workflows, meets security and governance expectations, and delivers consistent outcomes."

Hybrid AI Becomes the Default Enterprise Architecture

As AI workloads scale, infrastructure strategy is emerging as a defining CIO decision. The Playbook finds that 86% of organizations across Asia Pacific now incorporate on-premises or edge environments as part of hybrid AI architectures, effectively making hybrid AI the default model for enterprise AI deployments.

In India, 90% of organizations prefer hybrid AI architectures, combining on-prem and edge environments to balance performance, security, and regulatory requirements. Key drivers include data privacy and compliance requirements, high cloud costs, and the need to support distributed operations and data.

"India's AI journey reflects a builder mindset. As 59% of organizations move into active adoption and budgets grow at the fastest pace in the region, enterprises are prioritizing infrastructure and workforce readiness to industrialize AI responsibly and at scale. With nearly \$3 in expected return for every dollar invested, AI is evolving from pilot programs to core business infrastructure," said Shailendra Katyal, Vice President and Managing Director, Lenovo India. **SME**

ZENDESK DOUBLES DOWN ON AGENTIC AI WITH FORETHOUGHT DEAL TO REDEFINE CUSTOMER SERVICE

Proposed acquisition positions Zendesk to lead the agentic service era, projecting 2026 as the year AI agents will surpass human service

Autonomous AI Set to Surpass Human Agents in Customer Interactions

Autonomous AI agents are expected to handle more customer service interactions than humans this year, signalling a structural shift in how businesses manage customer experience. To accelerate this transformation, Zendesk has announced a definitive agreement to acquire Forethought. The proposed deal will expand Zendesk's AI agent capabilities on its Resolution Platform, enabling intelligent automation across service platforms and communication channels.

From Conversation Handling to AI-Driven Resolution

"The era of simply managing conversations is over. The future of customer experience requires agentic capabilities built for definitive resolution," said Tom Eggemeier, CEO of Zendesk. He noted that Forethought's advanced AI aligns closely with Zendesk's vision of building autonomous systems that continuously learn from every customer interaction to deliver faster and more accurate resolutions.

Forethought Sees Global Expansion Through Zendesk

"Forethought was founded on the belief that AI will transform customer experience for every business," said Sami Ghoche, Co-Founder and CEO of Forethought. He added that joining Zendesk will accelerate the company's mission by leveraging Zendesk's platform, resources, and global reach, enabling faster innovation and wider adoption of AI-driven customer experience technologies.

AI Already Resolving Majority of Customer Queries

Zendesk says its AI agents already resolve more than 80% of customer interactions end-to-end, with human and autonomous agents working together. Its Resolution Learning Loop enables the AI to improve continuously by learning directly from customer conversations without requiring manual retraining.

Toward Fully Self-Learning AI Agents

With the addition of Forethought's technology, Zendesk aims to evolve its AI systems into fully self-learning agents capable of generating, adapting, and executing complex workflows across any service channel or platform. Each interaction further improves performance, enabling AI to independently resolve a wider range of customer issues over time.

New Capabilities to Power Next-Generation Service Automation

The combined platform will introduce several advanced capabilities, including specialized AI agents for B2B, B2C, and B2E environments, self-improving AI driven by the Resolution Learning Loop, autonomous workflow execution, native voice automation for high-volume interactions, and expanded reach into enterprise systems—even those without APIs—eliminating manual processes.

Customers to Benefit from Greater AI Scale and Innovation

Existing Forethought customers will continue receiving uninterrupted service while benefiting from Zendesk's global scale and investment. Meanwhile, Zendesk customers will gain access to enhanced AI capabilities, stronger support, and a more unified customer experience platform. New customers will also be able to adopt the AI solution independently without requiring the Zendesk platform.

Acquisition Expected to Accelerate Product Innovation

Zendesk believes the proposed acquisition could accelerate its product roadmap by more than a year, delivering immediate value to customers and strengthening its position in the rapidly evolving agentic AI market.

Industry Leaders See a Defining Moment for AI-Driven CX

Industry experts view the deal as a significant signal about the future of customer experience. Keith Kirkpatrick, Vice President and Research



TOM EGGEMEIER
CEO, ZENDESK

"FORETHOUGHT'S ADVANCED CAPABILITIES PERFECTLY ALIGN WITH OUR VISION FOR AGENTIC SERVICE. TOGETHER, WE WILL BE SCALING SELF-IMPROVING AI THAT LEARNS FROM EVERY INTERACTION. RESOLUTION IS OUR IDENTITY, AND LOYALTY IS THE OUTCOME. THIS PROPOSED ACQUISITION WILL ENSURE OUR CUSTOMERS HAVE THE ABSOLUTE BEST TOOLS TO DRIVE MEASURABLE GROWTH IN THE AI ERA."

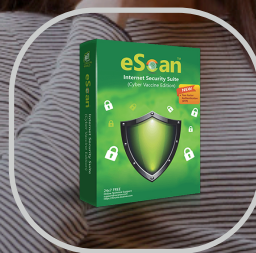
Director at The Futurum Group, said the move reflects strong confidence in both agentic AI technology and the market's readiness to adopt autonomous customer service systems.

Deal Expected to Close by March End

The transaction between Zendesk and Forethought is expected to close by the end of March, subject to customary closing conditions and regulatory approvals. **SME**

SOHO SPECIAL

Small Office Home Office Solution for India Market



Small Office and Home Office has been attracting lot of vendor attraction for quite some time. However, the segment attained critical significance with the advent of the Work from Home (WFH) culture triggered by the global pandemic. As an unprecedented migration of data to the cloud, kick-started by massive digitization across the globe, became the most visible phenomenon, it only further reinforced and provided the much required tailwind to the SOHO segment. Although the WFH culture has weathered a bit, it hasn't lost steam altogether. In fact today, enterprises have gleefully embraced a hybrid work culture. The WFH culture has resulted in a massive uptick in demand for SOHO products. Be it the ubiquitous wireless, optical mouse or the desktop mounted webcams; be it video collaboration software like zoom or Microsoft

Teams, connecting individuals with their teams across geographies or cybersecurity solutions that can protect your data privacy even on the face of expansive exposure of attack surface; be it visual output delivering monitors or powerful keyboards yielding raw performance; be it presentation spotlighting projectors or trendy Bluetooth PC Speakers, the SOHO segment is for sure passing through an interesting phase. It's overwhelmingly marked by three trends: TRACTION, TRACTION & TRACTION.

Given this, we, at SME Channels, have endeavored to bring before this SOHO Special Feature, which catalogues only the most impactful SOHO Products across business segments. Due care has been taken to map out only those select products that our editorial team feels can positively impact performance in a Home office environment. **SME**

BRAND NAME

Lenovo

MODEL NAME

Lenovo Yoga Pro Series (Aura Edition)

WHAT'S UNIQUE ABOUT IT

The Lenovo Yoga Pro Series (Aura Edition) represents a new generation of premium AI-powered laptops built for professionals, creators, and productivity-focused users. Powered by the latest Intel Core Ultra processors, the Aura Edition delivers powerful CPU, GPU, and AI acceleration that enables faster multitasking, intelligent performance, and efficient handling of demanding workloads.

The Yoga Pro Series easily manages tasks such as content creation, software development, data analysis, and heavy multitasking. Its AI-optimized architecture ensures smooth performance.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Intel Core Ultra processors with built-in AI acceleration
- PureSight Pro high-resolution display with vibrant color accuracy
- Optional NVIDIA GeForce RTX graphics for creative workloads
- High-speed SSD storage and advanced memory configuration
- Dolby Atmos speakers and premium audio system
- Wi-Fi 7 connectivity and Thunderbolt ports
- Premium design with advanced cooling architecture
- AI-optimized Windows experience for productivity

SOHO FRIENDLY QUOTIENT

The Lenovo Yoga Pro Series (Aura Edition) is well suited for small offices, home offices, and independent professionals who require powerful computing in a premium and portable device. Its strong processing capabilities, high-quality display, and advanced connectivity support business applications, virtual meetings, and creative workloads with ease.





Apple

BRAND NAME

Apple

MODEL NAME

Apple MacBook Air (M5)

WHAT'S UNIQUE ABOUT IT

The Apple MacBook Air (M5) represents the latest evolution of Apple's ultra-portable laptop lineup, designed to deliver powerful performance in an exceptionally thin and lightweight form factor. Powered by the advanced M5 chip, the device offers faster CPU and GPU performance along with improved AI-driven processing, enabling smooth multitasking and efficient handling of everyday professional workloads. Built for mobility and productivity, the MacBook Air (M5) easily supports tasks such as content creation, office productivity, web-based apps and virtual collaboration.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Apple M5 chip with improved CPU, GPU, and AI capabilities
- Thin, lightweight, fanless design for silent operation
- Liquid Retina display with vibrant colors and sharp visuals
- Long battery life for all-day productivity
- macOS ecosystem integration with enhanced security
- Fast SSD storage and unified memory architecture
- High-quality camera, microphones, and speakers
- Thunderbolt / USB-C connectivity for fast data transfer

SOHO FRIENDLY QUOTIENT

The MacBook Air (M5) is an excellent choice for small offices and home offices seeking a powerful yet portable computing solution. Its strong performance, long battery life, and seamless macOS ecosystem make it ideal for business productivity, virtual meetings, creative tasks, and multitasking, enabling professionals to work efficiently from anywhere.

BRAND NAME

HP

MODEL NAME

HP EliteBoard G1a Keyboard

WHAT'S UNIQUE ABOUT IT

The HP EliteBoard G1a Keyboard is designed to deliver a premium, reliable typing experience for modern professionals and business users. Built with a sleek, minimalist design and durable construction, the keyboard is engineered for comfort, precision, and long-term productivity. Its responsive keys provide smooth tactile feedback, enabling fast and accurate typing during extended work sessions.

The EliteBoard G1a integrates seamlessly with modern workspaces, supporting both wired and wireless connectivity options for flexible deployment across office and remote environments.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Responsive keys with smooth tactile feedback
- Sleek and durable professional design
- Compact layout for comfortable everyday use
- Wired / wireless connectivity options
- Spill-resistant construction for reliability
- Compatible with modern business devices
- Designed for long typing sessions and productivity
- Lightweight and workspace-friendly form factor

SOHO FRIENDLY QUOTIENT

The HP EliteBoard G1a Keyboard is well suited for small offices and home offices seeking a dependable and comfortable typing solution. Its durable build, responsive keys, and flexible connectivity make it ideal for daily productivity tasks, and virtual meetings,



HP

BRAND NAME

Logitech

MODEL NAME

Logitech Signature Slim Keyboard K950

WHAT'S UNIQUE ABOUT IT

The Logitech Signature Slim Keyboard K950 is designed to deliver a comfortable, modern typing experience for professionals who work across multiple devices and platforms. Featuring a sleek, low-profile design, the keyboard combines minimalist aesthetics with efficient functionality, making it ideal for contemporary workspaces. Its laptop-style keys provide smooth, quiet, and responsive typing, enabling users to maintain productivity during long working hours.

The K950 supports multi-device connectivity, allowing users to easily switch between computers, tablets, or smartphones with a single keystroke.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Slim, modern design with low-profile keys
- Quiet and responsive laptop-style typing experience
- Multi-device connectivity with easy switching
- Customizable shortcut keys for faster workflow
- Wireless connectivity with reliable performance
- Compatible with Windows, macOS, and other platforms
- Long battery life for uninterrupted productivity
- Compact design suited for modern workspaces

SOHO FRIENDLY QUOTIENT

The Logitech Signature Slim Keyboard K950 is ideal for small offices and home offices seeking a stylish, efficient typing solution. Its multi-device connectivity, quiet keys, and customizable shortcuts enable professionals to manage multiple tasks smoothly while maintaining productivity in compact or hybrid work environments.



Logitech

BRAND NAME

Keychron

MODEL NAME

Keychron V5 Max

WHAT'S UNIQUE ABOUT IT

The Keychron V5 Max is a customizable mechanical keyboard designed for professionals and enthusiasts seeking a premium typing experience with advanced flexibility. Built with an ergonomic 1800 compact layout, it combines the functionality of a full-size keyboard with a more space-efficient design for modern workstations.

Equipped with QMK and VIA firmware support, the keyboard allows deep customization, enabling users to remap keys, create macros, and personalize shortcuts for specific workflows. It features a gasket-mount design with sound-absorbing materials that deliver a softer and quieter typing feel.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- QMK / VIA programmable firmware for deep customization
- 2.4 GHz wireless, Bluetooth 5.1, and wired USB-C connectivity
- 1800 compact layout for efficient workspace usage
- Hot-swappable mechanical switches
- Durable double-shot PBT keycaps with OSA profile
- Gasket mount design for improved typing comfort
- South-facing RGB backlighting
- Multi-device compatibility with Windows, macOS, and Linux

SOHO FRIENDLY QUOTIENT

The Keychron V5 Max is well suited for small offices and home offices that require a customizable and reliable typing solution. Its programmable keys, multi-device connectivity, and ergonomic design help professionals manage multiple workflows efficiently.



Keychron

FROM THE GROUP EDITOR'S DESK



HOW THE “GOLF WAR” IS RESHAPING INDIA’S IT CHANNEL PARTNER MARKET

■ **SANJAY MOHAPATRA**
sanjay@Accentinfomedia.com

The emergence of the so-called “Golf War” a geopolitical and economic standoff among major global trading blocs has begun to exert deep and far-reaching influence on the Indian IT channel ecosystem. While the conflict does not involve direct military engagement, its economic ramifications mirror the shockwaves traditionally associated with kinetic wars. For India’s IT channel partners, who sit at the intersection of global hardware supply lines, enterprise digital adoption, and multinational technology vendor ecosystems, the disruption is both immediate and structural.

At the heart of the “Golf War” is a breakdown of cooperation among leading Western economies and energy-rich Gulf nations over trade terms, technology access, and strategic resource control. The resulting volatility has triggered currency fluctuations, energy price spikes, and global supply chain realignments. For Indian IT partners especially those dependent on imported infrastructure components such as servers, networking gear, and storage systems these disruptions translate into uncertain pricing, elongated procurement cycles, and shrinking

margins.

One of the earliest impacts has been a slow-down in enterprise capital expenditure, particularly in sectors most exposed to global trade. Manufacturers, logistics firms, and large retailers key customers for IT resellers and system integrators have begun deferring non-essential technology upgrades. This has shifted demand from traditional hardware projects to managed services, cloud migrations, and subscription-based models, where upfront costs are lower and business continuity is prioritized over expansion.

The conflict has also intensified the global push for technology sovereignty, compelling multinational vendors to reassess regional distribution strategies. As Western hyperscalers and OEMs navigate new export compliance requirements and shifting geopolitical alignments, Indian partners are experiencing delays in product availability, more complex certification mandates, and stricter audit requirements. Smaller partners often reliant on predictable vendor incentives are feeling the squeeze the most.

Yet, amidst the turbulence, Indian IT channel partners are uncovering unexpected opportunities. With global enterprises looking to diversify their outsourcing dependencies, India’s reputation as a resilient and scalable IT hub is strengthening. Partners with expertise in cybersecurity, cloud operations, and automation are witnessing an uptick in demand as businesses respond to elevated cyber-risk and supply-chain uncertainty. The push toward AI-driven optimisation, largely accelerated by the crisis, is enabling partners to evolve from implementers to strategic advisors.

Ultimately, the “Golf War” is less about conflict and more about redefinition. It is forcing Indian IT channel partners to transition from traditional hardware-led business models to service-centric, globally diversified, and capability-driven ecosystems. Those who adapt quickly strengthening vendor relationships, expanding service portfolios, and building resilience into operations will emerge not just unscathed, but significantly stronger in a newly reordered global technology landscape. **SME**

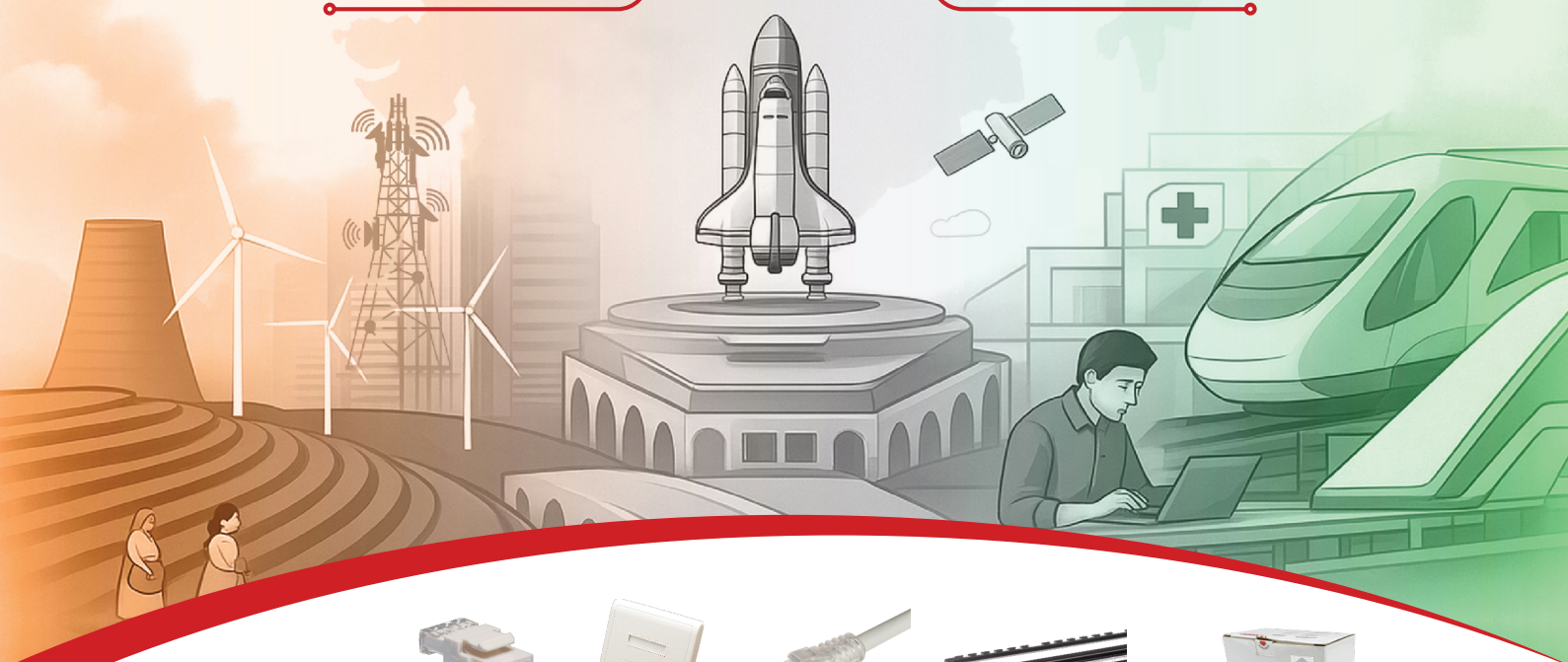
TRUTHFULLY INDIAN

BY BIRTH. BY WORK. BY VISION.

**30+ YEARS
OF IT NETWORKING
EXPERTISE**

**MADE IN INDIA
PRODUCT
PORTFOLIO**

**SOLUTIONS
COMMITTED TO
INDIA'S PROGRESS**



STRUCTURED CABLING SOLUTIONS



**COLLAPSIBLE
DOOR KEYSTONE**



FACE PLATE



**CAT6 UTP
PATCH CORD**



**CAT6 UTP 24 PORT
180 DEGREE PATCH PANEL**



**CAT5e RJ45
CONNECTOR**

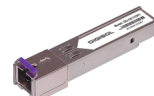
FTTH SOLUTIONS



DUAL BAND ONU



GEpon OLT



GEpon OLT TRANSCEIVER



GPON OLT

WIRELESS SOLUTIONS



**HIGH GAIN
WIRELESS DUAL-BAND
USB ADAPTERS**



**ENTERPRISE
Wi-Fi 6
ACCESS POINT**



**INDOOR CEILING
MOUNT Wi-Fi 6
ACCESS POINT**



**IN-WALL CEILING
MOUNT Wi-Fi 6
WIRELESS AP**



**ENTERPRISE ACCESS POINT
CONTROLLER**

SWITCHING SOLUTIONS



SMART MANAGED SWITCH



WEB MANAGED SWITCH



FULLY MANAGED SWITCH



UNMANAGED SWITCH



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LogMeIn Rescue

Enterprise-ready
remote support
solution for rapid,
secure, customizable,
AI-powered
troubleshooting
across any device.

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management
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all-in-one device
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