

# Budget's focus on AI-based skilling to nurture future entrepreneurs: Industry

## AI ENABLING, EMPOWERMENT

- Focus on embedding technology in diverse areas
- Enhance enrolment of women in STEM
- Creating skill centres near industry and logistics hubs
- Coordinated framework to accelerate AI research

NEW DELHI

The Union Budget 2026 signals a decisive shift in how India is approaching technology, from adoption to strategic capability building



THE government support to new technologies through AI mission, National Quantum Mission, Anusandhan National Research Fund, Research and Innovation Fund promises to be a big boost for the Indian higher education institutions that are nurturing India's future entrepreneurs, industry leaders said on Monday.

The Union Budget 2026 signals a decisive shift in how India is approaching technology, from adoption to strategic capability building.

The emphasis on AI, semiconductors, cloud and data infrastructure reflects a clear understanding that leadership in the digital economy is built bottom-up, starting with strong foundations. The strengthening of the India AI Mission provides a coordi-

nated framework to accelerate AI research, deployment and ethical governance across sectors," said CP Gurnani, Co-Founder and Vice Chairman, AIONOS.

Importantly, this is not a narrow tech agenda. By aligning AI investments with skilling, workforce readiness and MSME enablement, the Budget recognises that scale, inclusion and competitiveness must move together, he mentioned.

The focus on embedding technology in diverse areas is designed to benefit farmers in the field, enhance enrolment of women in STEM and upskill youth keen ready to lap up new opportunities

**Chocko Valliappa, Vice Chairman, Sona College of Technology**

cation sector is higher by 14.2 per cent over RE (revised estimate) 2025-26 of Rs121,949 crore. As per the revised estimate, the actual spend on education was 5 per cent less than the budgeted amount," he said.

The Budget proposal for creating five University townships near major industrial

and logistics corridors hosting multiple universities, colleges, research institutions, skill centres is a welcome step.

"Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Maharashtra with rich manufacturing industry base and higher education institutions could easily accommodate one such University township," Valliappa noted.

According to industry experts, the Union Budget sends a clear signal that India's next phase of growth will be powered by AI-led digital capabilities, large-scale skill transformation, and globally competitive technology services.

The proposed Education to Employment and Enterprise framework is a timely intervention to bridge the curriculum-industry gap, particularly in emerging areas such as AI, data engineering, and digital platforms, where demand is outpacing talent readiness," said Sachin Alug, CEO, NLB Services.

The focus on tier 2 and tier 3 regions as Digital Economy Zones strengthens India's Global Capability Center ecosystem by unlocking new talent pools and enabling distributed, resilient operating models beyond metros, Alug noted.

## INDIAWOOD 2026 show from Feb 26 in B'luru

BIZZ BUZZ BUREAU  
HYDERABAD

THE 26th edition of the biennial event INDIAWOOD 2026 will be held at the Bangalore International Exhibition Centre (BIEC) from February 26 to March 2. Organised by NürnbergMesse India, the show is set to attract woodworking and furniture manufacturing industry players.

The event is further supported by EUMABOIS, the European Federation of Woodworking Machinery Manufacturers.

Set to be the largest edition in its history, the show will host over 1,000 brands from more than 50 countries, welcome 90,000 industry professionals, and span 85,000 sqm of exhibition space, marking a 15 per cent growth over the previous edition.

The scale and diversity of participation reflect strong global confidence in India's manufacturing capabilities and align with the country's Viksit Bharat vision, where advanced manufacturing, exports and global integration are key growth drivers.

Sonia Prashar, Managing Director, NürnbergMesse India, said: "INDIAWOOD 2026 represents the growing confidence, maturity and global ambition of India's woodworking and furniture manufacturing industry.

## BIZZTOON



## NASA's Perseverance Rover completes 1st AI-planned drive on Mars

The rover -- about the size of a car and carrying seven scientific instruments -- has been exploring Mars, studying its geology and atmosphere, as well as collecting samples since 2021

NEW DELHI



THE six-wheeled Perseverance rover has completed the first drives on Mars that were planned by artificial intelligence (AI), NASA said.

Conducted on December 8 and 10, 2025, the demonstration used generative AI to create waypoints for Perseverance.

The complex decision-making task is typically performed manually by the mission's human rover planners at the US space agency's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Southern California.

"This demonstration shows how far our capabilities have advanced and broadens how we will explore other worlds," said NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman.

"Autonomous technologies like this can help missions to operate more efficiently, respond to challenging terrain,

and increase science return as distance from Earth grows. It's a strong example of teams applying new technology carefully and responsibly in real operations," he added.

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## Budget boosts India's evidence-based holistic healthcare ecosystem: Ayush Minister

These institutions are expected to elevate academic standards and strengthen evidence-based integrative care

NEW DELHI



THE Union Budget announcements link health policy with rural livelihoods, export growth, youth employment and entrepreneurship — strengthening India's emergence as the world capital of evidence-based holistic healthcare, Ayush Minister Prataprao Jadhav said on Monday.

Hailing Budget announcements that significantly strengthen the Ayush ecosystem, he said the measures reflect the government's unwavering commitment to building a holistic, inclusive, and globally competitive healthcare system where Ayush stands as a vital pillar of integrative health.

Finance Minister Nirmala

Sitharaman announced a series of landmark initiatives to expand education, research, quality assurance, global leadership, medical value tourism, and skilled workforce development in Ayush.

According to Jadhav, these measures reinforce India's aspiration to position traditional medicine as a key driver of preventive healthcare, economic growth, and global leadership in wellness.

There is a proposal to

establish three new All India Institutes of Ayurveda (AIIAs) to expand high-quality undergraduate and postgraduate education, advanced research, and tertiary care services.

These institutions are expected to elevate academic standards and strengthen evidence-based integrative care across the country.

The Budget also proposes upgrading Ayush pharmacies and drug testing laboratories to meet higher certification standards.

According to the minister, this move will enhance product quality, consumer confidence, and export readiness while supporting farmers cultivating medicinal plants and MSMEs engaged in processing and manufacturing.

## SC ruling on menstrual hygiene a landmark step for women's dignity, stigma-free education: Experts

NEW DELHI

THE Supreme Court's recognition of menstrual hygiene as a right to life is a landmark step for women's dignity and stigma-free education, said public health experts on Saturday.

The apex court, has ruled that access to menstrual hygiene is an integral part of a girl child's right to life, dignity, health, and education.

A Bench of Justices J B Pardiwala and R Mahadevan, while observing that "a period should end a sentence - not a girl's education," stated that the government bears a positive obligation under Article 21 of the Constitution to protect the right to health, particularly the menstrual health of girl children. The SC also issued a comprehensive set of man-



datory directions to all states and UTs (union territories) to ensure free sanitary napkins, functional gender-segregated toilets, and menstrual health awareness in every school across the country.

"Menstrual hygiene in schools has been a longstanding problem that requires assertive intervention. By mandating these measures, we are preventing infections, promoting equality, and removing stigma," Rajeev Jayadevan, Executive President of IMA Cochin and Convenor of the Research Cell, Kerala, told media.

## Indian scientists develop single-unit device to capture, save solar energy

The new technology paves way for efficient, low cost, and eco-friendly power solutions for portable, wearable, and off grid technologies

NEW DELHI



INDIAN scientists at the Department of Science and Technology (DST) have developed a solar-powered energy storage device that can both capture and store energy in a single unit, marking a major step towards clean, self-sustaining storage systems, an official statement said.

Unlike conventional solar systems that require separate units for energy harvesting and storage, the new technology can do both functions, reducing cost and energy losses during conversion, it said.

The statement from the Ministry of Science and Technology said the device known as photo-rechargeable supercapacitor was developed by researchers at the Centre for

help of binder-free use of nickel-cobalt oxide (Ni<sub>2</sub>CoO<sub>4</sub>) nanowires, which have been uniformly grown on nickel foam using a simple in situ hydrothermal process.

"These nanowires, only a few nanometres in diameter and several micrometres long, form a highly porous and conductive 3D network that efficiently absorbs sunlight and stores electrical charge. This unique hybrid system allowed the material to act simultaneously as a solar energy harvester and a supercapacitor electrode," the statement detailed.

Conventional hybrid systems relied on additional power management electronics to regulate voltage and current mismatches between the energy harvester and the storage unit.

The resultant system complexity and device footprint was detrimental for miniaturised and autonomous devices, the statement said.

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## Why Arab world's outreach to India reshaping geopolitics, global trade geometry

As global fault lines deepen, Arab world's outreach to Bharat is no longer about energy alone. It is about finding a partner that can anchor growth, capital, stability in an increasingly fragmented global economy



THE POLITICA

Nothing political about it



Major Sunil Shetty

Breaking the Post-WW-II Trade Order

The assembly of all 22 members of the Arab League in New Delhi for the Bharat-Arab engagement was not a ceremonial exercise in diplomacy. It was a strategic signal, one that followed close on the heels of India's landmark trade breakthrough with the European Union. Together, these moves suggest something larger at play: New Delhi is no longer content operating within the trade and geopolitical architecture shaped by the post-World War II Western order.

For decades, global trade flows, security guarantees, and political legitimacy were mediated through a narrow set of Western institutions and alliances. That order is now fraying. Supply chains are fragmenting, conflicts are regionalising, and capital is searching for safety without strings. In this moment of churn, Bharat has chosen strategic silence over ideological grandstanding, and that restraint

has become its most potent tool. By bringing the Arab world to the table in New Delhi with a clear emphasis on trade, energy, and strategic cooperation, Bharat signalled its willingness to shape an alternative axis of growth, one that does not reject the West but no longer depends on it for validation.

**Bharat as a predictable partner in an unpredictable world**

What distinguishes Bharat today is not just economic scale, but credibility. India has emerged as a dependable partner—commercially, diplomatically, and strategically. Its economy offers stability and growth; its diplomacy is non-interventionist but firm; and its military posture is defensive, restrained, yet decisive when required.

This balance matters. Global investors and governments alike are wary of partners who are either too aggressive to trust or too pliable to respect. India occupies the rare middle ground: capable without being coercive, assertive without being destabilising.

Recent years have clearly demonstrated this posture. Bharat has maintained energy and trade ties across rival blocs, kept shipping lanes in the Indian Ocean secure, and absorbed global shocks, from pandemics to wars, without exporting instability. This combination of economic resilience, geopolitical weight, and credible

defence capacity makes India a "predictable partner" in the truest sense: a rarity in today's fractured geopolitical order.

Nowhere is this clearer than in Bharat's role in the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). An emerging trans-regional trade corridor linking India, West Asia, and Europe. These routes are not just about moving goods faster; they are about reducing dependence on conflict-prone chokepoints and offering an alternative to routes dominated by any single power. For Arab states looking to diversify their economic and strategic bets, India provides depth, economic, political, and military support without ideological baggage.

**From trading partner to Value-Chain ally**

The most consequential shift in India-Arab relations lies in how trade itself is being reimaged. Bharat is no longer pitching itself as a low-cost manufacturing base or a passive consumer of hydrocarbons. Instead, it is positioning itself as a value-chain partner.

For the Arab world, this distinction matters. The Gulf's economic priorities have evolved rapidly. Sovereign visions now emphasise industrial diversification, advanced manufacturing, food security, digital infrastructure, and defence self-reliance. What these economies need is not another supplier of finished goods, but a



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partner that can co-create value across the production chain.

Bharat fits this requirement uniquely. In automobiles and auto components, Indian firms already operate at global quality benchmarks while retaining cost efficiency. In electronics, India is moving up the stack, from assembly to design, testing, and component ecosystems. In defence manufacturing, joint production and technology partnerships are replacing buyer-seller models.

Food security and agri-trade offer another compelling example. India is no longer just an importer of fertilisers or a buyer of food commodities. It is a supplier of grains, processed foods, agri-technology, and supply-chain management solutions—critical for water-scarce Middle Eastern nations. As

a value-chain partner, Bharat can help stabilise food supply while generating annual export revenues of billions of dollars.

Critically, this approach also helps Arab states reduce over-dependence on China-centric supply chains. India does not present itself as a replacement factory; it offers diversification with value addition.

**Capital Flows: When diplomacy turns into investment**

Diplomacy ultimately proves its worth when it moves capital. Here, the shift is already visible. Gulf sovereign wealth funds increasingly view Bharat as a destination where capital is not only secure but productive.

Investments are flowing into

Indian ports, logistics platforms,

fintech ecosystems,

data centres,

and renewable energy projects.

These are not speculative bets; they are long-term plays aligned with India's growth trajectory and the Gulf's need for steady, inflation-resistant returns.

In an era of global fragmentation, where emerging markets are often penalised for political risk, India stands out as a safer bet. Its regulatory institutions function, contracts are largely honoured, and policy continuity is no longer hostage to electoral cycles. For a Gulf capital seeking scale without volatility, Bharat offers something rare: growth with governance.

This influx of patient capital does more than fund infrastructure. It binds India and the Arab world into a shared economic future, where stability on one side directly benefits the other.

**Security Cooperation: The invisible hand of trade**

Trade does not thrive in a vacuum. It needs security, especially in regions where energy routes, ports, and shipping lanes are vulnerable to disruption. The Arab world understands this reality acutely.

India's unequivocal stance on zero tolerance toward terrorism, reaffirmed through joint declarations with