

Bharat Innovates 2026 secures \$254.5 mn funding commitments

Event brought together global investors, industry leaders, researchers, policymakers, startups and academic institutions to accelerate innovation

NEW DELHI

THE ongoing three-day event Bharat Innovates 2026 facilitated funding commitments and advanced-stage investments worth approximately \$254.5 million while generating strong investor interest in Indian DeepTech startups during the second day of the summit, according to an official statement issued on Tuesday.

The Ministry of Education stated that the second day of the event brought together global investors, industry leaders, researchers, policymakers, startups and academic institutions to accelerate innovation, strengthen technology partnerships and advance the commercialisation of DeepTech solutions.

The day began with an innovation showcase featuring technologies developed by Indian startups and premier higher education institutions across sectors including biotechnology, semiconductors, advanced manufacturing, healthcare, energy, mobility, space and artificial intelligence.



In addition, the summit hosted discussions involving global industry, investment and research leaders on subjects ranging from bio-innovation and advanced manufacturing to space, defence supply chains and international investment.

Participants highlighted the importance of patient capital, cross-border collaboration and stronger pathways for commercialising research.

A major highlight of the day was the investor-startup engagement programme, where more than 80 DeepTech startups presented their innovations before panels

comprising over 50 global investors from more than 10 countries, according to the ministry.

The startups pitched across six thematic areas -- space and defence, artificial intelligence and semiconductors, healthcare and MedTech, biotechnology and AgriTech, energy and climate technologies, and advanced manufacturing.

According to the ministry, the sessions enabled direct engagement with global venture funds and corporate venture capital firms, with more than 40 startups receiving confirmed investor follow-up commitments.

India's 5G subscriptions set to reach 1.1 bn by 2031

Number of commercial differentiated connectivity service offerings based on 5G SA network slicing from CSPs continues to grow globally

NEW DELHI

INDIA is expected to have more than 1.1 billion 5G subscriptions by the end of 2031, reaching about 81 per cent subscription penetration, a report said on Tuesday.

The report from Ericsson said 5G adoption in India continues to grow rapidly, driven by the availability of affordable 5G-enabled smartphones and devices, expanded network coverage across almost all districts, and the increasing rollout of 5G Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) services.

The number of commercial differentiated connectivity service offerings based on 5G SA network slicing from CSPs continues to grow globally.

5G subscriptions in India reached 430 million at the end of 2025, accounting for 35 per cent of mobile subscriptions, the report said adding that 4G subscriptions are expected to fall from around 570 million in 2025 to nearly 160 million by 2031 as users migrate to



5G. Currently, 4G remains the dominant technology in India at 46 per cent of mobile subscriptions.

The country also continues to lead globally in mobile data consumption per smartphone, with average monthly usage already at 37 GB and expected to nearly double to 70 GB by 2031.

"India's rapidly growing 5G adoption based on enhanced mobile broadband and 5G FWA is transforming consumer experiences. The robust and secure 5G infrastructure in the country is driving inclusion, governance, and innovation at scale and is serving as a powerful foundation for Digital India," said Nitin Bansal, Managing Director, Ericsson India. A service provider in India recently launched differentiated connectivity services based on network slicing for its postpaid 5G customers, signalling the evolution of advanced 5G use cases in

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- Nitin Bansal, MD, Ericsson India

the market. Global 5G mobile subscriptions passed the three billion mark during Q1 2026, while 5G Standalone (SA) network slicing commercial offerings from communications service providers continue to grow significantly.

6th edition of healthcare summit held in Hyd

BIZZ BUZZ BUREAU HYDERABAD

THE 6th Edition of the Healthcare Summit was successfully held at Banjara Bhawan, Hyderabad, recently, bringing together over 100 thought leaders, healthcare professionals, innovators, entrepreneurs, and industry stakeholders.

The two-day summit focused on creating meaningful value for patients, providers, and society by encouraging new thinking across healthcare delivery, innovation, prevention, and outcomes.

The theme of this year's summit was built around three powerful pillars: CODE - Innovate with Intelligence, CARE - Deliver with Compassion, CURE - Create Impact with Outcomes.

The summit created a strong platform for cross-pollination of ideas between healthcare, technology, startups, AI, preventive care, hospital systems, and public health.

The discussions encouraged participants to rethink health beyond treatment and move towards systems that create healthier communities.

SoftBank rolls out OpenAI 'patches' against cyberattacks

TOKYO: Japanese technology giant SoftBank Group Corp. is launching a service using OpenAI technology to protect against the looming threat of cyberattacks, the company said Tuesday.

Chief Executive Masayoshi Son called Japan's vulnerability to cyberattacks "a crisis," comparing it to a potential assault by machine guns instead of the rifle shots of the past.

SoftBank will offer "a patching service," targeting the nation's top 3,000 companies behind crucial infrastructure like airports, power systems and transportation, Son said. "I feel it is our duty," Son said, repeatedly referring to the criminal attackers as "the bad guys."

Move to boost Bhashini platform across public procurement network

NEW DELHI



A new government initiative aims to strengthen multilingual digital capabilities across India's public procurement ecosystem through the BHASHINI Platform, India's national language Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI).

The Digital India BHASHINI Division (DIBD) and Government e-Marketplace (GeM) have signed an MoU to promote multilingual access, multilingual governance, and multilingual service delivery across GeM's digital platforms, enabling stakeholders to access information and services in their preferred languages.

"BHASHINI is committed to making digital public infrastructure truly inclusive by enabling citizens and enterprises to interact in their preferred Indian languages. Our collaboration with GeM will help democratise access to public procurement through multilingual and voice-enabled technologies, ensuring that language is no longer a barrier to participation," said Amitabh Nag, CEO, Digital India BHASHINI Division.

The initiative seeks to advance 'Voice First' language technology infrastructure and Generative AI solutions while supporting seamless interaction across 22 officially recognised Indian languages and other Indian languages, according to IT Ministry. GeM and the BHASHINI team will work towards the co-creation, integration, and deployment of multilingual digital public resources through initiatives including BHASHINI Udyat, Mitra, Appmitra, Sahyogi, and Pravakta.

Agentic AI summer camp at Meru Intl School

BIZZ BUZZ BUREAU HYDERABAD

AI Ready School has concluded three batches of its flagship Agentic AI summer camp, a four-week immersive programme designed for students from Grades 7-9. Conducted in collaboration with Meru International School, the initiative introduced participants to the emerging field of Agentic Artificial Intelligence through structured, project-based learning. Students built AI-powered systems, created intelligent workflows, and developed real-world applications under expert mentorship, culminating in a showcase where they presented their projects to mentors, teachers, parents, and peers.

Blood-based indicator of organ age developed

NEW DELHI



RESEARCHERS have developed a blood-based indicator of age of an organ that can be used to assess its current age and predict the risk of a disease that might affect it 10 years later.

One's biological age measures how well the body functions, compared to the chronological age. However, the organs inside the body are all said to be ageing at different speeds.

The researchers, including those from the US' Stanford University, looked at 11 separate organ systems -- brain, muscle, heart, lung, arteries, liver, kidneys, pancreas, im-

mune system, intestine and fat.

"We've developed a blood-based indicator of the age of your organs. With this indicator, we can assess the age of an organ today and predict the odds of your getting a disease associated with that organ 10 years later," senior author Tony Wyss-Coray, professor of neurology and neurological sciences, Stanford University School of

Medicine, said. Findings published in the journal Nature Medicine showed that the biological age of one particular organ, the brain, plays an "outsized" role in determining how long an individual might live.

Nearly 45,000 people of ages 40 to 70 were randomly selected from the UK Biobank and monitored for up to 17 years for changes in their health status.

MODI BREAKS A 'FAILED' RECORD!

If Nehru wrecked India's economy, weakened its defence and mishandled foreign policy, why is surpassing his tenure being celebrated as a historic achievement?



THE POLITICA Nothing political about it

POLITRICKS



BN Kumar

NARENDRA Modi has completed 4,398 days as Prime Minister, overtaking Jawaharlal Nehru's tenure and becoming India's second-longest-serving PM. The milestone has understandably triggered celebrations within the BJP and among its supporters.

Yet the occasion raises an awkward question. If the BJP's telling of history is to be believed, Modi has just broken the record of a leader blamed for crippling India's economy, weakening its defence, mishandling foreign policy and burdening the country with decades of bad policy. For over a decade, Nehru has remained the ruling establishment's favourite political punching bag, held responsible for everything from Kashmir and China to socialism and bureaucratic inefficiency.

If that is indeed the case, why is surpassing his tenure being celebrated as a historic achievement?

There is another irony. The comparison itself depends on where one starts the clock. Nehru served as Prime Minister from Independence in August 1947 until his death in May 1964 -- nearly seventeen years. The milestone now being celebrated excludes the formative years between Independence and the first general election in 1952, when

the foundations of the Indian republic were being laid. Even on the question of longevity, therefore, the comparison is not quite as straightforward as it appears.

The question goes to the heart of how India measures leadership. Longevity in office is one thing; what is achieved during that tenure is quite another.

When Nehru took charge in 1947, he inherited a country devastated by colonial exploitation and traumatised by Partition. Millions were displaced, communal violence was raging, literacy levels were among the world's lowest and industrial capacity was negligible. India was overwhelmingly rural, desperately poor and dependent on imports for many basic requirements.

His challenge was not to accelerate a functioning economy but to build a modern nation almost from scratch.

Much of what later generations came to take for granted emerged from that effort. Steel plants, dams, scientific institutions, public sector enterprises, research laboratories and centres of higher education were products of a larger vision of self-reliance and nation-building. One may disagree with aspects of Nehru's economic model, but there can be little disagreement about the scale of the task he undertook.

Whatever the shortcomings of his policies, the India that later liberalised, industrialised, went nuclear, reached space and claimed a larger global role inherited a substantial institutional foundation.

Nehru also helped establish another democratic convention that successive prime ministers broadly respected: direct engagement with the press. The exchanges could be sharp and adversarial, but he understood that scrutiny was not a threat to democracy; it was one of its safeguards.

He was famously tolerant of satire and political cartoons. Nehru's relationship with the legendary cartoonist Shankar became symbolic of a democratic culture comfortable with criticism. His oft-quoted remark, "Don't spare me, Shankar," reflected a political confidence rarely seen among contemporary leaders. Such comfort with dissent, satire and public scrutiny appears increasingly rare in contemporary politics.

That tradition survived governments of every political colour. Even Manmohan Singh, despite being criticised for his reticence, periodically addressed full-fledged press conferences and subjected himself to open questioning. The Prime Minister was expected to answer unscripted questions from the media.

Under Modi, however, that democratic convention has effectively disappeared. After more than a decade in office, he has yet to hold a traditional press conference where journalists are free to ask unrestricted questions and receive substantive answers -- a point repeatedly raised in these columns. Carefully curated interviews with no follow-up questions have replaced genuine two-way media engagement.

The decline of direct accountability is reflected not only in political communication but also in governance.

Unlike Nehru, Modi took charge of a liberalised economy,



stable democratic institutions and an established administrative machinery. It has certainly not lacked ambition. Demonetisation, Make in India, Smart Cities, Housing for All and the five-trillion-dollar economy were all billed as transformative initiatives. Yet many of the promised outcomes remain frustratingly elusive.

Today, Viksit Bharat occupies the space once held by Achhe Din. The slogans change; the promises remain familiar.

Supporters of the government point to highways, airports, welfare schemes, digital infrastructure and improved service delivery. Yet leaking airport terminals, collapsing bridges, damaged highways and the absence of accountability have repeatedly turned showcase projects into symbols of poor execution.

Transparency remains a major question mark. The Electoral Bonds scheme, eventually struck down by the Supreme Court, became a symbol of the growing disconnect between official claims and democratic accountability. Likewise, concerns about

the independence of investigative agencies, regulatory institutions and sections of the media have refused to go away.

The welfare debate reveals another contradiction. BJP leaders frequently attack "revdi" politics, yet BJP-ruled states routinely announce subsidies and cash-transfer schemes of their own. At the same time, the government proudly highlights free ration support for nearly 80 crore people.

A large GDP may make for impressive headlines, but it is per capita income and living standards that ultimately determine how prosperous a nation really is.

Foreign policy offers perhaps the most revealing comparison of all. Nehru's record was certainly not flawless. The 1962 war with China remains a serious blemish on his legacy. Yet he gave India an independent voice in world affairs and maintained productive relations with both the United States and the Soviet Union without becoming subordinate to either. His meetings with world leaders captured the imagination of a newly independent nation.

Photographs of Nehru strolling with President John F. Kennedy on the lawns of the White House became iconic images of India's arrival on the global stage and were proudly displayed in homes and roadside poster shops across the country. That tradition of strategic autonomy continued under Indira Gandhi. During the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971, she stood firm despite intense pressure from the Nixon administration and the deployment of the US Seventh Fleet to the Bay of Bengal.

The Modi government has invested heavily in leader-centric diplomacy and carefully choreographed optics, projecting the image of a confident India commanding global attention. Despite the much-publicised Modi-Trump camaraderie, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio's warning regarding India's alleged purchases of sanctioned Iranian oil created an awkward diplomatic moment and drew no meaningful public response from New Delhi. Equally uncomfortable have been Donald Trump's repeated claims that he helped broker or enforce a ceasefire between India and Pakistan during Operation Sindoor.

For a government that frequently projects muscular nationalism at home, such silence appears incongruous abroad. Foreign policy is not judged by hugs, handshakes, stadium spectacles or photo opportunities. It is judged by whether a nation can assert its interests, defend its positions and speak with confidence when challenged.

Nehru was hardly beyond criticism. The China debacle and aspects of the licence-permit system remain serious blemishes on his record.

There is also a difference between accepting responsibility and endlessly shifting blame.

The Emergency remains one of Indian democracy's darkest chapters. Yet even Indira Gandhi eventually acknowledged that excesses had occurred.

Public acknowledgement of mistakes appears largely absent in the Modi era. Every criticism is dismissed as propaganda, while failures are attributed to inherited problems, hostile forces or political opponents.

There is also something curious about the BJP's continuing obsession with Nehru. It resembles a grandson who spends years denouncing his grandfather as the source of every family problem while simultaneously boasting that he has finally occupied the grandfather's chair for longer than anyone else.

Politics rewards perception; history rewards performance. It judges leaders not by the length of their tenure but by whether institutions became stronger, freedoms more secure and opportunities wider.

Records can be broken. Legacies must be built.

That is why the celebration of 4,398 days, while politically understandable, leaves a larger question unanswered. If Nehru supposedly left behind only failures, then what enduring benchmark has Modi established apart from surpassing his tenure?

The answer cannot be a number.

Because breaking a record is not the same as building a nation.

(The columnist is a Mumbai-based author and independent media veteran, running websites and a youtube channel known for his thought-provoking messaging.)