

Gujarat gov't rolls out red carpet for data centres

New policy offers incentives to attract hyperscale infrastructure investments

VIKSIT GUJARAT - DATA CENTRE POLICY

- Cable landing stations are planned
- Global connectivity adds to attractiveness as a data centre destination
- Power tariff support, SGST reimbursement

GANDHINAGAR

THE Gujarat government on Thursday launched the Viksit Gujarat - Data Centre Policy 2026-29, a dedicated policy aimed at attracting investments in hyperscale data centres, artificial intelligence infrastructure and digital services, with Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel unveiling the policy booklet at a state function in Gandhinagar.

Deputy Chief Minister Harsh Sanghavi, Science and Technology Minister Arjun Modhwadia, Chief Secretary Manoj Kumar Das, senior government officials and representatives from the tech-

nology industry attended the launch.

Science and Technology Department Secretary P Bharathi said the policy was intended to create the infrastructure needed to support India's growing digital economy.

"Data is even more valuable than oil. Every digital payment, every AI model, every cloud application, every online transaction, every government service and every innovation is powered by data," she said, adding that data centres had become strategic digital infrastructure for developed economies.

She said India generates nearly 20 per cent of the world's data but accounts for only around three per cent of global data centre capacity, while the United States and China together hold about 70 per cent of worldwide capacity.

"The question is, where will India's future digital infrastructure be built? Gujarat is ready to answer that



question," she said. P Bharathi also announced that two cable landing stations are planned in Gujarat and that another cable landing station project would be announced soon, saying the additional international connectivity would strengthen the state's attractiveness as a data centre destination.

According to the policy presented at the launch, Gujarat has recognised data centres as strategic infrastructure and will offer fiscal incentives including capital and interest subsidies, power tariff support, SGST reimbursement, electricity duty reimbursement, support

“Data is even more valuable than oil. Every digital payment, every AI model, every cloud application, every online transaction, every government service and every innovation is powered by data

-- P Bharathi, Science and Tech Dept Secretary

for desalination plants and stamp duty exemptions.

Officials said the policy also includes non-fiscal incentives designed to create a competitive environment for

hyperscale data centre investments and AI infrastructure.

The policy document states that Gujarat's existing infrastructure includes 69 gigawatts of installed power capacity, of which 47 gigawatts comes from renewable energy, alongside industrial hubs such as Dholera and GIFT City.

It projects that global data centre capacity could approach 200 gigawatts by the end of the decade, and says, "Gujarat aims to play a larger role in that expansion while supporting the state's target of becoming a \$3.5 trillion economy by 2047".

Addressing the gathering, Science and Technology Minister Arjun Modhwadia said India had historically missed earlier industrial transformations but had emerged as a leader in sectors such as vaccine manufacturing and was becoming a major player in semiconductors.

He said the next phase of growth would be driven by artificial intelligence and quantum computing.

AI keeps elephants safe on TN railway tracks

Thermal cameras, drones protect elephants along critical rail corridor

COIMBATORE



TAMIL Nadu's AI-powered wildlife monitoring system has helped prevent elephant deaths on a vulnerable railway stretch near Coimbatore, with thousands of real-time alerts enabling train pilots to slow down or stop trains for the safe movement of wild elephants over the past two-and-a-half years.

The artificial intelligence-based camera network, installed along the railway tracks at Puthupathi village in the Madukkarai Forest Range, has generated more than 7,100 alerts on elephant movement since it became operational.

These alerts prompted loco pilots to either reduce speed or halt trains on more than 3,280 occasions, significantly reducing the risk of collisions between trains and elephants. The system forms part of the state government's efforts to eliminate elephant deaths caused by train accidents in one of Tamil Nadu's most sensitive wildlife corridors.

Officials say the initiative has so far ensured zero elephant fatalities on the monitored railway stretch while

facilitating nearly 9,500 safe elephant crossings. The project combines artificial intelligence, thermal imaging cameras and continuous human monitoring to detect elephant movement near railway tracks in real time.

Once an elephant is detected, alerts are immediately relayed to forest personnel and railway authorities, allowing swift action to prevent accidents. A dedicated control and command centre functions round the clock to coordinate the operation. Forest officials, front-line staff, drone operators and railway personnel work together to monitor elephant movements and respond to alerts.

After receiving information from the AI cameras, forest teams move to the location to prevent elephants

from entering the tracks and guide them safely across the railway corridor.

The monitoring system is integrated with railway communication channels. Station masters at nearby railway stations are alerted immediately, following which loco pilots are instructed through wireless communication to slow down trains while elephants cross the tracks.

Forest and railway officials also share live updates on elephant locations through a dedicated messaging platform to ensure coordinated action. Apart from elephants, the AI-enabled surveillance network has also detected several other wild animals, including gaur, deer and leopards, creating a broader wildlife monitoring system in the region.

TPTL joins Salesforce to boost mfg

BIZZ BUZZ BUREAU
HYDERABAD

TRIVENI Power Transmission Limited (TPTL), manufacturer of high-speed gearboxes and engineered power transmission solutions, has announced its collaboration with Salesforce, as part of its broader digital transformation strategy aimed at strengthening customer engagement, enhancing business visibility, and enabling sustainable growth. The collaboration marks a significant milestone in TPTL's journey toward becoming a more connected, data driven, and customer centric organisation. By leveraging Agentforce Sales and Agentforce Service, TPTL aims to unify customer information, improve forecasting, and strengthen collaboration across key business functions.

Apple, Broadcom ink \$30-bn pact to boost chip production

NEW DELHI

APPLE has significantly expanded its partnership with Broadcom through a new multi-year agreement worth more than \$30 billion, marking the company's largest manufacturing commitment in the United States and reinforcing its broader strategy to strengthen domestic semiconductor production. The agreement, which extends through 2031, is expected to support the production of more than 15 billion chips in the US.

As part of the deal, Broadcom will invest \$1.5 billion to expand its manufacturing facility in Fort Collins, Colorado, although neither company disclosed when the additional production capacity would become operational.

The expanded partnership



builds on Broadcom's longstanding role as a supplier of wireless connectivity components for Apple. Under the new agreement, Broadcom will manufacture custom silicon in the United States, including wireless connectivity components that power Bluetooth, Wi-Fi and cellular connectivity across multiple generations of Apple devices. Earlier this week, Broadcom disclosed in a filing with the US Securities and Exchange Commission that it had signed new long-term agreements with Apple to develop and supply custom application-specific integrated circuit (ASIC) silicon products through 2031.

Filipino twin toddlers get new lease of life

NEW DELHI

TWO toddler twin brothers from the Philippines have successfully undergone living donor liver transplants at a Delhi hospital after a rare congenital disorder led to liver failure in both children, according to a statement issued by the hospital on Wednesday.

Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals said the procedures were the first twin liver transplants among the 645



paediatric liver transplants performed at the hospital and involved back-to-back surgeries led by paediatric gastroenterologist Dr Anupam Sibal and liver trans-

plant surgeon Dr Neerav Goyal. The 23-month-old twins, Tyler and Kelly, were born prematurely, weighing 2 kg and 2.4 kg, respectively. Within two weeks of birth, both developed persistent jaundice and pale-coloured stools. They were diagnosed with Choledochal Cyst Type IVA, a rare congenital condition in which the bile ducts become abnormally enlarged, resulting in progressive liver damage if left untreated.

According to the hospital, the twins later suffered recurrent gastrointestinal bleeding, abdominal fluid accumulation, poor growth and repeated hospitalisations. As their condition worsened despite medical treatment, liver transplantation was considered the only life-saving option.

The hospital said finding two suitable living donors for siblings requiring transplants within days of each other was an additional challenge.

Navi Mumbai airport cleared for drug imports

NEW DELHI: The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has enabled the import of drugs through the newly inaugurated Navi Mumbai Airport in Maharashtra, expanding designated entry points for pharmaceutical consignments to 42 ports, an official statement said. The move through amendment to Rule 43A of the Drugs Rules, 1945 that adds Navi Mumbai to the list of airports through which drugs may be imported, marks a significant step towards strengthening the pharmaceutical supply chain and facilitating ease of trade.

Govt, Nasscom working on AI course for undergrads

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The government is working with IT industry body Nasscom for developing an artificial intelligence curriculum for undergraduate programmes, a senior executive said on Thursday. The National Association of Soft-

ware and Services Companies (Nasscom) is a leading IT industry body. "The government is working with Nasscom to review and change the AI curriculum for all undergraduate (programmes)," the industry grouping's President Rajesh Nambiar said.

BharathCloud unveils its brand mascot Badal

BIZZ BUZZ BUREAU
HYDERABAD

BHARATHCLOUD, a Hyderabad-based AI cloud service provider, recently unveiled Badal, its first-ever brand mascot, marking a significant milestone in the company's growth journey and reinforcing its commitment to making cloud and AI technologies more approachable, relatable, and accessible for businesses and users across India. As BharathCloud expands its presence with businesses, institutions, startups, and government ecosystems, Badal is being launched to humanise a highly technical category and simplify cloud adoption journeys for customers at every stage. This launch also comes at a time when the company is seeing a rapidly increasing number of customers and strategic partners as it endeavours to strengthen its bonds with various stakeholder communities.



THE POLITICA

Nothing political about it
AMIR-HUSSEIN RADJIY & SARAH EL DEEB

HE is the grandson of an influential Shiite cleric, born in Qom — the heart of religious studies in Iran — and raised in a traditional family that embraced the theology.

But by his late 20s, he had stopped praying and given up on clerical rule. Now, he can barely discuss politics or religion with his siblings and father.

The tech worker, now in his mid-30s, says Iranian society is deeply divided, even among opponents of the Islamic Republic, and he blames one man — Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The supreme leader who ruled Iran for over three decades laid to rest on Thursday after being killed at the start of the war.

Processions of his coffin in Tehran and other cities brought out gigantic crowds of supporters in a show of strength by the hardliners at the core of the Islamic Republic, who lionised him as a defender of clerical rule who had stood up to the West and Israel.

But underneath run deep veins of discontent that have grown over decades of bloody repression, international sanctions and economic mismanagement, and have widened since authorities killed thousands of anti-government protesters in January.

"A gap has opened up in homes across the country that is really remarkable," said the tech worker

Bitterly divided Iran grapples with Khamenei's legacy

Khamenei defied sanctions to build up country's nuclear programme, its arsenal of missiles and network of militant allies

by phone from Tehran, where he now lives. Like others interviewed by The Associated Press to discuss Khamenei's rule, he spoke on condition of anonymity out of security fears.

The funeral has brought Iran's divide into focus

Khamenei's death, in Israeli strikes on February 28, crowned his legacy in the eyes of Iran's rulers and his supporters, who consider him a martyr.

Echoing the slogans of ultra-hardliners who oppose talks with the US, some who turned out for the funeral called for US President Donald Trump to be killed in revenge.

"Our goal is to prove to the world that we will not submit to oppression and tyranny, and that we will avenge the blood of our leader," said Hossein Akbari, a 60-year-old mourner in Tehran.

Khamenei took the reins in 1989 after the death of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the charismatic ideologue who had led the overthrow of the US-allied shah a decade earlier and inspired a mass following.

Under the banner of resisting the West, Khamenei defied sanctions to build up the country's nuclear programme, its arsenal of missiles and its network of militant allies across the region.

Within Iran, he entrenched hard-line clerical rule by largely neutralizing the reform movement. He gave the Revolutionary Guard immense military,

political and economic power. As younger Iranians sought liberalisation, he tried to maintain strict control over people's personal lives and dress codes.

The 2009 protests marked a turning point

A critical turning point came in 2009 with the repression of protests sparked by vote-rigging allegations in that year's presidential elections. Dozens were killed in the first major crushing of a large protest movement.

It generated widespread hopelessness, according to an Iranian activist and former political prisoner who writes for a reformist-leaning magazine in Tehran.

A senior aide to Iran's reformist President Masoud Pezeshkian acknowledged last month that Iran was "severely polarised" between hard-core supporters of the Islamic Republic and those who want its downfall.

But Ali Rabiei said there was a large part of society between the "two poles" that the government could lean on to deliver change within the system. His remarks were carried by the state news agency IRNA.

There is no reliable polling in Iran, but elections offer a glimpse of public opinion.

Turnout in Iran's last presidential elections dropped to some of the lowest levels ever, seen as a sign that millions hoping for change saw no use in voting. Still, the hard-line candidate garnered 13.5 million votes, while Pez-



Khamenei took the reins in 1989 after the death of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the charismatic ideologue who had led the overthrow of the US-allied shah a decade earlier and inspired a mass following

eshkian, the reformist, received 16.3 million.

Many are scarred by January's crackdown

Repeated eruptions of protests since 2009 were met with bloody crackdowns. January's was the deadliest, when security forces killed thousands to crush nationwide demonstrations that started over economic woes and then snowballed into calls for Khamenei's overthrow.

The sister of a protester who was shot to death on January 9 in Tehran summarised Khamenei's legacy in one word: injustice.

For working-class families, Iran's plunging economy has only worsened since the war. "Workers can barely afford to buy bread, everything is so expensive," she said.

"Since my sister died, mentally, financially, our life has fallen apart. All we do is look at photos and videos of my sister and cry. What do we have left?" she said from her home in eastern Iran.

A quiet form of dissent appeared over the past month as Iranians marked the holy period of Ashoura, commemorated with funeral-style marches honouring

a martyred 7th-century Shiite saint. Videos posted on social media have shown some Iranians joining the processions with photos of family members killed in the January crackdown.

Iranians feel despair, uncertainty over the future

One legacy of Khamenei is the Islamic Republic's ability to survive his death and the massive US-Israeli assault. The leadership emerged from the war with an interim deal with the US that won it some immediate gains. The deal promises an even greater windfall — a lifting of sanctions — if Iran and the US reach a final nuclear agreement, though that is uncertain.

"It's a victory for the Islamic Republic," a 35-year-old woman who joined the January protests said of the deal. But "for Iran's people, until we see the results, we won't know if it is."

She worries about the chasm in Iranian society and rifts among opponents of the theocracy, some of whom hope for its quick overthrow while others see the potential for gradual change.

"The space for dialogue is very closed, and I don't mean only the government. I mean the people," she said.

After losing his job at a tech company, a 33-year-old Tehran resident who also joined the January protests said his main concern was the wrecked economy, where unemployment and prices have surged. Many of his friends

are now jobless, and his wife's employer slashed salaries.

"All of us, frankly, are just trying to stay alive and all of our struggle is taken up with meeting basic needs like rent and food," he said.

The theocracy is still under threat

Rebin Rahmani, a Kurdish activist once imprisoned in Iran and now living in Paris, said the theocracy under Khamenei lacked any answer to multiplying political and economic problems — except further repression.

"Its insistence on iron-fisted, security-driven approaches will only trigger further unrest," said Rahmani, a director at the Kurdish Human Rights Network. Protests are "reigniting every few years with renewed force."

Pezeshkian and other pragmatists within the system want to use US talks to try to get sanctions lifted and rebuild the economy. For now, they appear to have the backing of Khamenei's son and successor, Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, who is still in hiding but lent his tentative support to talks in a written statement.

Peacetime might prove the real test of the elder Khamenei's legacy, said Ali Vaez, Iran director at the International Crisis Group, as rival factions vie to define the future of the Islamic Republic.

"Wartime gave the system a degree of cohesion under shared duress. But the governance challenges remain just as stark."