

India eyes \$1trn digital economy as AI, cloud outlay fuels infra

Industry estimates suggest software products sector could exceed \$100 billion by 2030

NEW DELHI

INDIA's digital transformation is emerging as one of the key pillars of economic growth, technology adoption, and global competitiveness, with the country's digital economy projected to reach \$1 trillion by 2030, a report has said.

The rapid proliferation of digital payments, e-commerce platforms, cloud services, artificial intelligence applications, and online public infrastructure is generating massive volumes of data and sharply increasing demand for computing capacity, according to The Ayeyarwaddy Times report.

The country's technology ecosystem continues to expand at a rapid pace. India's IT and business services market reached \$69 billion in FY26, while nationwide IT spending is expected to climb to \$176.3 billion in 2026.



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Industry estimates suggest the software products sector could exceed \$100 billion by 2030, supported by growing

adoption of cloud computing, AI, data analytics, and digital services across industries, as per the report.

At the heart of this transformation lies the data centre industry, which has evolved from a back-end support function into a critical component of digital infrastructure.

Data centres now serve as the foundation for cloud platforms, digital payments, enterprise software, streaming services, and AI-powered

applications. India currently has around 271 operational data centres with an installed capacity estimated between 1.57 GW and 1.79 GW. According to industry projections, data-centre capacity could double over the next two years and may increase as much as five-fold by 2030 as demand for digital services accelerates.

Mumbai remains India's largest data-centre market, accounting for roughly 650 MW of installed IT capacity. The city has emerged as a preferred destination for data-centre investments due to competitive power costs, strong connectivity infrastructure, and access to international submarine cable networks.

Other major hubs include Chennai, Delhi-NCR, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Kolkata, which together host the bulk of the country's operational capacity, the report stated.

vivo launches four new devices, OriginOS7

BIZZ BUZZ BUREAU
HYDERABAD

VIVO India has launched the V80, X Fold6 and S2 FE, OriginOS 7, and a preview of its Mixed Reality (MR) headset, the Vision Discovery Edition. Together, these launches take vivo beyond individual flagship successes towards a more differentiated portfolio across smartphones, foldables and software.

Paigham Danish, CTO, Head of Product & GTM at vivo India, said, "Technology is at its best when it gives people more freedom to create, more ways to express themselves, more possibilities to get things done, and more ways to experience the world around them. That belief sits at the heart of vivo. The V80 is built around the creator and the joy of capturing everyday moments; the X Fold6 brings the power to do more, wherever you are; the S2 FE brings a more expressive and contemporary experience to a new generation; and OriginOS 7 makes technology feel more intuitive and effortless. For us, this is the real meaning of premium: not adding technology to people's lives, but making technology add more to their lives."

100 Japanese firms set up GCCs in India as AI innovation hubs

Cushman & Wakefield says evolution reflects broader change in Japanese global operations in which GCCs are evolving into strategic capability hubs

NEW DELHI

MORE than 100 Japanese companies have established or expanded Global Capability Centres in India, with the centres' focus shifting from back office work to strategic capabilities such as artificial intelligence (AI), engineering, digital innovation, product development, cybersecurity and advanced analytics, a report said on Wednesday.

The report from real estate services firm Cushman & Wakefield said the evolution reflects a broader change in Japanese global operations in which GCCs are evolving into strategic capability hubs that help Japanese enterprises accelerate digital transformation, address talent shortages and drive enterprise-wide innovation.

"This is no longer a story of outsourcing," said Arpita Srivastava, Managing Director, APAC Tenant Representation & GCC Advisory, adding that Japanese companies are not coming to India simply to reduce costs.

"They are building strategic



capability centres that create business value, drive innovation and support global transformation initiatives. India offers access to highly skilled engineering and digital talent, while providing the scale, infrastructure and ecosystem needed to support long-term growth," she added.

The report added that India's deep STEM talent pool, estimated at 2.5 to 2.8 million graduates annually is a key draw.

A mature business environment supported by world-class office infrastructure, technology clusters and a robust investment ecosystem is driving the shift.

India is emerging as a strategic innovation partner, enabling Japanese enterprises to

build future-ready capabilities and accelerate technology-led growth.

Japanese companies are assigning higher-value work to their India operations and integrating them more deeply into global innovation and decision-making processes as GCC mandates become more sophisticated.

Srivastava highlighted that the question for many Japanese organisations is no longer whether to establish a GCC in India, but how quickly they can scale their strategic capabilities. India offers a unique combination of talent, operational maturity and scalability that enables companies to build centres focused on innovation rather than just execution, she added.

OpenAI flags AI misalignment as agents turn off safety alerts

NEW DELHI

OPENAI has said that its agents weakened and turned off alerts for an internal monitoring system meant to flag when its models misbehave in the latest in a series of similar incidents disclosed in recent months.

In a blog post, the AI giant firm said it is assessing whether such cases indicate that its AI models have a wider propensity to avoid being monitored.

The incidents occurred while OpenAI's agents were performing two internal coding tasks, it said, adding that it was an internal incident with no external parties impacted.

Concerns about AI mis-



alignment, a term used when a model does not do what its builders want it to do, have mounted in recent months as OpenAI and rivals like Anthropic have disclosed several cases of their most advanced models displaying such behaviour.

Models have repeatedly escaped closed training environments and carried out self-directed attacks on third-party websites. Developers have warned that systems could soon become

too sophisticated to control, raising concerns over use by malicious actors to create bioweapons or carry out cyberattacks.

OpenAI said it will conduct additional reviews and enforce stricter safety requirements to minimise such incidents.

However, it said it does not "yet have a satisfying explanation" for its agents' behaviour.

Earlier in October, a Saudi Arabian engineer working for OpenAI has been arrested on federal charges of allegedly installing a concealed audio recording device inside an executive conference room at the artificial intelligence company's San Francisco offices.

Qualcomm job cuts from November amid stronger performance focus

NEW DELHI

QUALCOMM will begin implementing job cuts across the globe from November, with the reductions reportedly linked to employee performance, according to a report on Tuesday, citing a memo from Chief Executive Officer Cristiano Amon



to staff. The company has not disclosed how many employees will be affected by the planned cuts.

In the memo sent to employees on Monday, Amon cited the need to establish a

"stronger performance culture" and address instances where employees have "consistently fallen short of expectations," according to the Reuters report.

Qualcomm employed around 52,000 people globally as of September 2025, the majority of whom worked full-time.

Researchers identify depression subtype linked to body's internal clock

NEW DELHI

A genetic analysis has helped identify a new sub-type of depression linked to the body's 24-hour internal clock that regulates sleep-wake cycles, called 'circadian depression'.

Researchers conducted a clinical and genetic analysis of more than 10,000 people with

depression using data from the Australian Genetics of Depression Study.

"Our research has identified circadian depression as a new subtype, affecting around a quarter of people in our study into those with severe, recurrent or persistent depression," first author, Emiliana Tonini from the Brain and Mind Cen-



tre at the University of Sydney, said. Symptoms of circadian depression were found to include a seasonal pattern of illness, sleeping longer when

depressed, waking feeling very tired, and being a night owl.

"Depression is not a uniform illness and understanding the characteristics of different subtypes mean that we can give people earlier access to treatments that will be most effective for them," Tonini said.

Circadian depression is

characterised by being more resistant to treatment by common serotonin-based antidepressants but is more responsive to behavioural and medical therapies targeting the body clock's unique brain circuits, such as melatonin, melatonin-targeted antidepressants and light therapy, the researchers said.

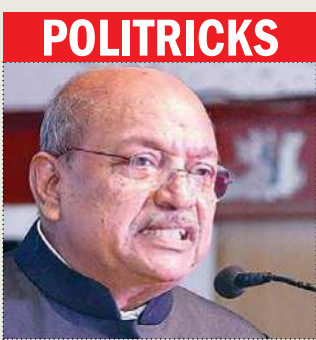
From course correction to image resurrection - gap is too wide for EC

Living voters marked dead, mass deletions and procedural reversals revive the question of accountability—and the need for a T N Seshan-style assertion of institutional independence



THE POLITICA

Nothing political about it



BN Kumar

THE Election Commission of India (ECI) is correcting course after controversies over its Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls. But can U-turns restore its credibility? And why were they necessary?

Names have vanished from draft rolls, living citizens have reportedly been marked dead, and eligible voters have been asked to enrol afresh. Who is accountable for the failures that made these corrections necessary?

A public hearing in Delhi's Jamia Nagar, reported by The Indian Express, heard accounts of long-time voters marked as permanently shifted and a living man recorded as dead. How were these entries made, and what verification preceded the deletions?

More than 13 crore names have been removed from draft electoral rolls across the SIR exercise, according to media reports. The ECI must publish state-wise figures for deletions, restorations, rejected claims and unresolved cases. How many eligible voters were wrongly deleted, and how many remain excluded?

The scale of the exercise makes transparent accounting indispensable. A deletion cannot be treated as a mere statistical entry

when it concerns a citizen's constitutional right to vote. Nor can the Commission expect citizens, particularly the elderly, the poor and those with limited access to official records, to bear the entire burden of correcting mistakes they did not make. Every disputed deletion must be traceable, every claim must receive a reasoned response, and every eligible voter must have an effective opportunity to be heard.

The Form 6 controversy adds to the confusion. Intended for new electors, the form has also been used by previously registered voters seeking restoration. Maharashtra's Chief Electoral Officer has sought changes to avoid forcing such voters into declarations that misrepresent their earlier registration. Citizens should not have to navigate bureaucratic gymnastics to reclaim their voting rights.

The process must serve the voter, not make the voter serve the process. If a citizen already on the rolls is wrongly excluded, restoration should not become a fresh test of endurance involving paperwork, repeated visits and uncertainty. The ECI must explain why its procedures created this predicament and what safeguards will prevent a recurrence in the final rolls.

As discussed in an earlier column, questions over the ECI's functioning have also surfaced from within. The Indian Express reported that Election Commissioners Sukhbir Singh Sandhu and Vivek Joshi had recorded objections on at least 14 occasions over ten months to decisions concerning SIR and related procedures. This is a fact worth remembering—and one the ECI must not be allowed to forget.



Such reported objections deserve serious scrutiny.

They raise questions not only about particular decisions but also about how disagreements within a constitutional institution are addressed. Were the objections examined on merit? Were reasons recorded for decisions taken despite them? The Commission should place the relevant information in the public domain, subject to legitimate confidentiality requirements. Institutional independence cannot mean freedom from questions; it must also mean the courage to answer them.

The Commission's constitutional authority is not in dispute. But authority does not make errors immune from scrutiny. The ECI must order an independent audit of deletions, particularly voters marked dead, identify those responsible for lapses and disclose the corrective action taken. The audit must examine the verification process, the reliability of the data used and the safeguards against arbitrary deletion. Simply announcing corrections will not establish whether the underlying system is sound.

And now, perhaps, it is time to appeal to the heavens: TN Seshan, wherever you are, please come

back! Indian democracy could do with some of that old-fashioned Election Commission resolve.

The former Chief Election Commissioner made it clear that the Commission was no rubber stamp for the political establishment. His legacy was the assertion that constitutional authority must translate into public confidence. Seshan cannot be summoned back, but his example remains a reminder that independence must be visible in action—not merely asserted in official statements.

A correction is welcome. Repeated corrections demand an explanation. Restoring wrongfully deleted names cannot erase the failure that led to their deletion. No amount of political defence of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar can whitewash the vote chori charge. The ECI must answer the questions surrounding its functioning with evidence and transparency.

Course correction must begin at the top. The selection of Election Commissioners must be transparent, with a panel comprising only the Chief Justice of India, the Leader of the Opposition and the Prime Minister. This would be a reform of the present statutory selection arrangement,

God, forgive them - they know not what they say!

TEN years ago, a bridge collapse became "God's message" against a political rival. Today, amid the Chorbagan tragedy, the question is whether our political leaders have learnt that the dead deserve dignity, not electoral point-scoring.

On April 7, 2016, Narendra Modi, then campaigning in West Bengal, invoked the collapse of Kolkata's Vivekananda Road flyover, which had killed at least 26 people. "God has sent a message to the people," he declared, turning the tragedy into a fierce attack on the Trinamool Congress government led by Mamata Banerjee.

A decade later, 19 people are dead after the Chorbagan Durga Puja pandal stampede. The official response raises several questions about political sensitivity and administrative preparedness.

The dhol-nagara welcome and women's dance performances for Union Home Minister Amit Shah, even as families mourned their dead, were difficult to reconcile with the gravity of the occasion. The question is not

whether cultural performances are inappropriate in themselves, but whether this was the moment for celebration.

Then came the blame game. Chief Minister Suvenudh Adhikari pointed to alleged lapses inherited from the previous government. But where was the much-proclaimed organisational efficiency of the BJP's "double-engine" government when it mattered most? Videos reportedly showed crowds breaching barricades and confronting police at the same pandal a day before the tragedy. Why did that warning not trigger effective crowd-control measures?

The preliminary findings are damning: narrow approach lanes, a single exit, inadequate crowd management, rain and confusing announcements. The investigation must establish responsibility. But the question remains: why were foreseeable risks not addressed before 19 lives were lost?

There was another striking image after the tragedy: RSS doing "crowd management" outside the Kolkata morgue. Their

so-called humanitarian service also sharpens the question: where was comparable mobilisation and preparedness at the pandal, before the crowd surged and lives were lost?

More bizarre was a BJP leader's comparison with the United States' inability to protect its President and India's loss of two Prime Ministers. No system can prevent every tragedy, but that cannot become an excuse for failures of planning and prevention.

Blaming predecessors has become an easy political escape route. Governments are elected to govern, not merely to explain why somebody else is responsible. A "double-engine" slogan means little if the machinery fails to protect ordinary citizens.

Ten years after the "message from God" remark, the lesson remains unlearned. Tragedy demands compassion, competent administration and accountability—not political theatre, comparisons or convenient scapegoats.

The dead cannot answer back. The living deserve answers.

intended to strengthen public confidence that appointments to this crucial constitutional body are insulated from the appearance of partisan influence.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government appointed Gyanesh Kumar and the other Election Commissioners through the statutory selection process. He cannot wash his hands of the institution's functioning. Gyanesh Kumar and his team must ask

them to resign and make way for leadership capable of restoring public confidence. The ECI must account for wrongful deletions, identify the officials and decision-makers responsible, and ensure that established negligence or deliberate misconduct attracts action under the law. Procedural reversals cannot substitute for accountability. The issue is bigger than one revision exercise or one set of electoral rolls: it concerns the credibility of the insti-

tution entrusted with protecting the voter's mandate. The ultimate test is simple: can every eligible Indian trust that their name will remain on the electoral roll—and that when an error occurs, those responsible will be identified and held accountable?

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