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Cabinet Boost for Jal Jeevan Mission as FICCI Water Awards Spotlight Industry's Conservation Role

BUSINESS Digest

MARCH 2026
VOLUME:22
ISSUE No: 12

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Printed and published by Director General on behalf of (or owned by) Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, New Delhi and Published at Federation House, Tansen Marg, New Delhi 110001

R.N.I No. DELENG/2004/13722

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FICCI is the voice of India's business and industry, reaching out to over 2,50,000 companies. Established in 1927, it is India's oldest and largest apex business organisation. FICCI serves its members from large (domestic and global companies) and MSME sectors as well as the public sector, drawing its strength from diverse regional chambers of commerce and industry.

EDITORIAL

From The Director General



India has crossed an inflexion point in its artificial intelligence journey — and the question before government, industry, and civil society is no longer whether to act, but how rapidly and equitably to distribute the benefits. That transition from declaration to delivery defines this edition of the Business Digest, centred on a conversation between S. Krishnan, Secretary of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, and Preeti Lobana, Chairperson of FICCI's AI Committee, on FICCI's recently launched podcast, The Fine Print.

The conversation arrives at a decisive moment. The AI Impact Summit held in New Delhi — the first such gathering convened in the Global South — drew 118 countries, more than 20 heads of state, and investment commitments totalling $200 billion, culminating in the New Delhi Declaration endorsed by 92 nations. That achievement now demands an equally ambitious delivery architecture. Secretary Krishnan sets out the execution framework with precision: a compute backbone built on market-underwriting, which has brought per-GPU-per-hour costs to approximately one-third of international rates; an AI Kosh datasets platform holding 10,000 datasets; and a regulatory posture grounded not in premature legislation but in the confident deployment of existing legal instruments, including the Digital Personal Data Protection Act.

What distinguishes India's approach is its insistence on breadth alongside depth. The ambition to make India the application capital of the world rests on a recognition that AI's transformative potential lies not at the research frontier but in its deployment across agriculture, healthcare, manufacturing, and services. The Agri Vistar programme — which enables a farmer to speak into a phone in any Indian language and receive expert agronomic advice in real time — illustrates precisely this vision. So does FutureSkills Prime, through which 27 lakh learners have enrolled, 40 per cent of them women and more than 60 per cent from Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities. Inclusion is not an afterthought; it is the design principle.

India's digital economy already grows at twice the pace of the broader economy and accounts for 12 to 13 per cent of GDP — a share projected to approach 20 per cent by the decade's end. The IMF estimates AI could add 0.8 per cent to global GDP annually, but Secretary Krishnan considers that figure conservative for a country with India's structural advantages: a world-class DPI stack, a deep talent pool, and the credibility to shape global governance norms.

FICCI and its membership remain firmly committed to translating India's AI moment into durable industrial adoption — extending opportunity to every tier of the workforce and every corner of the economy, in pursuit of the Viksit Bharat vision.

Jyoti Vij