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THE GREAT INTEGRATION

Technology, Talent, and Transformation in Asia

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Executive Summary

The SpeakIn Asia Dialogues Forum convened in Ahmedabad bringing together 15 senior leaders from some of India's most consequential industries — manufacturing, banking, healthcare, legal technology, EV infrastructure, defence electronics, dairy, and professional services. The conversation centred on Talent, Technology & Transformation: how India's enterprises are navigating the AI era, how GCCs are evolving from cost arbitrage to strategic value creation, and how organisations must redesign themselves from the inside out.

Ahmedabad sits at a unique intersection: Gujarat's commercial heartland, home to the Adani Group, Zydus Lifesciences, Torrent Pharmaceuticals, Sun Pharma, and hundreds of mid-market champions. It is a city where industrial heritage runs deep but entrepreneurial ambition runs deeper. The launch of GIFT City as India's first operational smart city and international financial hub has added a new dimension — making Ahmedabad a destination for GCCs, fintech, and global talent flows.

Four irreversible shifts emerged from the forum: the 'Four T's' — Talent, Technology, Transformation leading to Turnaround — must operate in alignment, not isolation; GCCs are ready for their strategic moment but leaders must claim a seat at the decision-making table, not just the implementation table; AI adoption fails when framed as a threat and succeeds when framed as a scaffold; and building talent from within is a more sustainable competitive advantage than external hiring alone.

15	4 T's	38%	1,800+
Industry Leaders	**Core Framework**	**EV Sales Share**	**GCCs in India**
Across 10 sectors	Talent, Tech, Transform, Turnaround	India's 2030 national target	Ahmedabad emerging as top-5 hub

KEY FORUM THEMES

- **AI as scaffold, not cage** — organisations winning on adoption frame AI as an enabler of human potential, not a replacement
- **The Four T's alignment gap** — Talent, Technology and Transformation often operate in silos, preventing the fourth T: Turnaround
- **Build from within first** — internal talent with institutional knowledge is being undervalued in the race to hire externally
- **GCC strategic inflection** — capability centres must shift from cost-saving narrative to revenue generation and board-level presence
- **Healthcare's COVID dividend** — two weeks of COVID accelerated two decades of technology adoption; the momentum must be sustained

Ahmedabad: Gujarat's Commercial Engine Meets the Knowledge Economy

Ahmedabad occupies a singular position in India's economic story. For centuries it was the 'Manchester of the East' — a textile and trading powerhouse. Today it is transforming into something far more complex: a city where legacy industrial conglomerates like Adani and Torrent operate alongside fintech unicorns, EV infrastructure companies, and globally connected GCCs.

₹8.7L Cr	GIFT City	30%+	Top 5
Gujarat State GDP	**India's First IFSC**	**India's Pharma Exports**	**GCC Hub Ranking**
Largest contributor to India GDP	80,000+ professionals by 2030	Gujarat's pharmaceutical corridor	Emerging alongside Bengaluru & Pune

The Entrepreneurial Advantage

What makes Ahmedabad distinctive is its deep entrepreneurial DNA. From Mahatma Gandhi's Sabarmati Ashram to Dhirubhai Ambani's first ventures, the city has always been a place where ideas become enterprises. This culture now shows up in the quality of the forum conversation — leaders here did not theorise about transformation; they brought case studies. TDS Lithium-Ion Battery exporting certified products to Japan. Tirex Transmission operating the second-largest EV charging network in India. Prompt DairyTech enabling real-time digital payments to farmers across thousands of villages.

As Thapar University's Dr. Urmi Mehta noted, this is precisely why educational institutions must embed themselves in this ecosystem — bridging the growing gap between student aspirations and recruiter requirements, and converting industry problem statements into academic capstone projects.

Theme 1 **The Four T's Framework: When Talent, Technology & Transformation Align**

The most structurally important idea to emerge from the Ahmedabad forum came from Otsuka Pharmaceutical's Kishore Upadhyay: Talent, Technology, and Transformation are only meaningful when they work in concert toward the fourth T — Turnaround of the business. When these three elements operate in isolation — as they frequently do — organisations spend billions and see negligible impact.

"Successful business outcomes depend on aligning the three T's — Talent, Technology, and Transformation — to achieve the fourth T: Turnaround. These elements often operate in isolation, leading to disconnects between what technology teams build and what businesses actually need."

Kishore Upadhyay — Director — Factory & SCM, Otsuka Pharmaceutical India

Technology Must Serve Business Goals, Not Drive Them

Bhupendra Pant of Patel Infrastructure articulated the same alignment problem from the CTO's perspective. Billions of dollars are spent on technology globally, yet when organisations ask whether the intended business benefits were actually realised, 'the story is not exciting.' His three-component model is deceptively simple: Technology + People + Process must be continuously reoriented around customer expectation. Without that alignment, even the most sophisticated systems deliver what he calls 'technical go-live' — which is not the same as business value.

"The purpose of technology in an organisation is simply this: using the Technology, People, Process piece to create the right value. Billions are spent, the technical go-live happens — and when you ask stakeholders if the intended benefits were realised, the story is not exciting. Technology is successful only when it solves a business problem."

Bhupendra Pant — Chief Technology Officer, Patel Infrastructure Limited

His automotive service centre example from Oman illustrated this perfectly: a tablet given to a service advisor — loaded with CRM context about the customer's history, preferences, and prior complaints — transformed an adversarial interaction into a value-creating conversation. The technology did not replace the skilled advisor; it gave them the context to perform at their best. This is the difference between 'deploying technology' and 'integrating technology.'

70%	2–3×	CXO+
Digital Transformations	**Iterations Required**	**Sponsorship Essential**
That fail to meet business objectives	Before technology achieves business value	CEO, CFO & function heads as co-owners

THE FOUR T'S IN PRACTICE — AHMEDABAD EXAMPLES

- **TDS Lithium-Ion Battery:** Overnight M&A technology transition — achieved product certifications and exports to Japan within 2 years
- **Patel Infrastructure:** CRM-powered service transformation — context-rich advisor interactions driving measurable NPS improvement
- **Prompt DairyTech:** 30-year journey digitising milk supply chain — real-time payments to farmers across thousands of villages
- **OPLinnovate:** Banking loan decisions compressed from months to minutes — GST, ITR, bank statement AI analysis delivering instant credit
- **Apexon:** Once-in-a-century transformation moment — structured reskilling programmes, certifications, and new AI-enabled reward frameworks

Theme 2 **AI as Scaffold, Not Cage: Winning the Culture Battle**

The most common reason AI transformation initiatives stall is not technology — it is culture. Every speaker at the Ahmedabad forum arrived at the same conclusion through different routes: the framing of AI as a threat to employment is self-defeating. Organisations that win on adoption are those that systematically reframe AI as a scaffold — a structure that supports and elevates human performance rather than replacing it.

"Think of AI as a scaffold versus a cage. It will help employees do better and generate better outcomes. The goal is to remove mundane, boring, low-IQ-intensive tasks so employees can focus on more value-added work. Create processes to systematically bring people into the fold so they are not guessing whether they will lose their job."

Saurabh Singhvi — Managing Director, Litera

From Fear to Frontline: Tirex's Bottom-Up Approach

Arth Patel of Tirex Transmission offered one of the forum's most practical insights: AI adoption programmes are being designed for the wrong audience. Most organisations focus on white-collar, managerial levels. Tirex chose to start at the frontline — educating their 300+ service technicians nationwide on how AI tools ease their daily work. The result: voluntary adoption rather than mandated compliance.

"We run AI adoption programmes at the frontline level — for over 300 service people across the nation — rather than the managerial levels. We educate frontline staff on how AI can ease their life. Forcing AI will not work; it must be presented as an assist."

Arth Patel — Co-Founder & CEO, Tirex Transmission

Autonomy, Mastery, Purpose: The Three Pillars of AI-Era Engagement

Autonomy: give employees maximum ownership over their work, removing micromanagement. **Mastery:** create deliberate pathways for skill development that give people a genuine sense of growth. **Purpose:** continuously connect individual effort to organisational mission so people feel empowered rather than surveilled.

THE SCAFFOLD FRAMEWORK — HOW ORGANISATIONS ARE WINNING AI ADOPTION

- **Tirex Transmission:** Frontline-first AI education across 300+ service technicians nationally, framed as life-easing, not job-threatening
- **Apexon:** Structured awareness → upskilling → certification pathway, new reward systems for AI-enabled roles
- **eInfochips:** 6 years fully hybrid with outcomes focus — 'I care about red flags, not green flags' — empowerment over surveillance
- **Inospire:** Medical transcription team made redundant by AI, reskilled using contextual knowledge into new higher-value roles

- **Adani GCC:** Continuous re-skilling as technology evolves — ERP → RPA → Gen AI → Agentic AI — careers survive through learning
- **Lexera:** Removed performance management process for 6 years, decoupled pay from performance — non-performer rate dropped to 1.5%

"Digital transformation is not new — it has evolved continuously over 25 years. From ERP to workflow automation, RPA, and now AI, every technological wave brought fears of job losses. Based on practical experience, none of these technologies eliminated jobs. They changed the way people work. Careers survive through continuous learning and re-skilling."

Sudesh Jain — Chief Operating Officer — GCC, Adani Group

Theme 3 Digital Banking & Fintech: India's Fastest Transformation Story

No sector better illustrates the speed and completeness of AI-driven transformation than Indian banking and financial services. Ravindra Misra of OPLinnovate traced a journey that compressed decades of change into a few years: from fully manual branch-based processes to completely digital, AI-driven customer journeys where loans are approved and accounts opened without a customer ever setting foot in a branch.

"Through AI and machine learning, platforms now analyse GST data, ITR, bank statements, and credit bureau information to enable instant credit decisions, reducing loan processing time from months to minutes. Innovation cycles have drastically shortened — organisations must now think in one-year horizons instead of three to four years."

Ravindra Misra — Chief Product Officer, OPLinnovate

Minutes	1 Yr	$8B+	85%
Loan Processing	**Innovation Horizon**	**India Fintech Investment**	**Banks with Digital Strategy**
Down from months in traditional banking	Replaced 3–4 year planning cycles	FY2024 — third largest globally	vs. 32% with full AI deployment

The Compliance-Innovation Tension

Misra also identified the core tension that defines the fintech agenda: regulatory compliance, data privacy concerns, and resistance to change — especially among smaller banks — remain the most significant barriers. India's regulatory architecture has been broadly enabling (UPI, Account Aggregator framework, OCEN for credit), but the pace of technology change is now outrunning the policy update cycle. The most critical success factor, in his view, is convincing stakeholders at all levels that AI-powered systems are reliable, secure, and genuinely scalable.

Theme 4 **The EV Mindset Shift: Technology Ready, Habits Lagging**

Ahmedabad is positioned at the centre of India's EV transition. Gujarat hosts Tata Motors' Sanand EV plant, and companies like Tirex Transmission — now part of the Hinduja Group — are building the charging infrastructure backbone. Yet Arth Patel's message was counterintuitive: the technology is ready, the infrastructure is nearly sufficient, and the economics are improving. The real barrier is behavioural.

"The real challenge for EV adoption is a mindset change. Moving from the habit of filling petrol when the red bar blinks, to the discipline of plugging in the car at home like a phone or laptop. 99% of people drive less than 100 km daily. Even the cheapest EV gives 200-300 km range. Charging infrastructure is a fear in people's minds, not a real challenge."

Arth Patel — Co-Founder & CEO, Tirex Transmission

Patel drew an illuminating parallel between EV adoption and personal health technology. Wearing a health ring, he discovered that late-night eating was disrupting his sleep patterns — data that was always available, but never acted upon. The same dynamic applies to EV adoption: people have access to the data that should inform better decisions (daily range requirements, home charging convenience, TCO advantages), but defaulting to familiar behaviour overrides the evidence. Changing this requires not just better technology, but better storytelling.

38%	2nd	100 km
EV Sales Share Target	**Tirex EV Ranking**	**Avg Daily Drive**
India's 2030 national goal	Second-largest EV charging brand in India	99% of drivers — well within EV range

Theme 5 **GCC Evolution: From Implementation Table to Decision-Making Table**

The Global Capability Centre conversation in Ahmedabad had a particular urgency. With Adani Group's GCC operations represented by Sudesh Jain and Lexera's Saurav Singhvi speaking from direct experience, the forum confronted the central question of the GCC agenda: has India's capability centre ecosystem truly moved beyond cost arbitrage, and if so, how do GCC leaders ensure they have the influence to match their capability?

"GCCs are starting to drive strategic value, but are not there yet. The biggest opportunity is changing the narrative from reducing cost to generating revenue and increasing overall impact. Leaders in the GCC space need to be on the decision-making table, not just the implementation table."

Saurabh Singhvi — Managing Director, Litera

The Agentic AI Moment for GCCs

Sudesh Jain of Adani Group placed the GCC evolution in the context of a 25-year technology cycle. Each wave — ERP, workflow automation, BPO, RPA, generative AI, and now agentic AI — has shifted the nature of work rather than eliminating it. But agentic AI represents something qualitatively different: autonomous systems that can orchestrate complex workflows without human intervention at each step. This is not just a productivity tool — it is an architectural shift that redefines what GCCs are for.

GCC STRATEGIC VALUE — WHAT THE SHIFT LOOKS LIKE

- **From cost saving to revenue generation:** GCCs co-creating products, filing patents, and owning P&L lines
- **From implementation to decision:** GCC leaders participating in global board conversations, not just execution reviews
- **From talent arbitrage to talent leadership:** GCCs as the source of domain expertise that headquarters relies on
- **From agentic AI adoption to agentic AI architecture:** GCCs designing the agent ecosystems, not just deploying them
- **From agentic AI to outcome ownership:** moving beyond output metrics to quality and strategic impact measures

Theme 6 **Build from Within: The Talent Paradox of the AI Era**

Perhaps the most provocative thread in the Ahmedabad forum came from Dr. Ankita Singh of Relevance Lab: in the race to acquire AI-ready talent externally, organisations are overlooking their most valuable asset — the people already inside. These individuals carry institutional knowledge, cultural context, client relationships, and system understanding that no external hire can replicate. The question is whether organisations are creating the conditions for these people to grow into AI-era roles.

"We are focusing too much on getting than building. People are being developed and managed outside of the system more than inside. Organisations sometimes hesitate to invest in internal people who have given their time, energy, trust, and loyalty — and who know the system so well. We have enough talent and will always have enough. The question is whether we are introducing a format that builds talent from the inside."

Dr. Ankita Singh — Chief People Officer & Board Member, Relevance Lab

The Google Maps Principle of Talent Development

Dr. Singh offered a memorable framework for internal development: organisations need to use the Google Maps principle. You cannot plot a route unless you know both your current location and your destination. Most organisations can articulate where they want to go in terms of AI readiness, but few have honestly assessed where they currently stand — and even fewer have mapped the internal talent pathways that connect the two. Without this clarity, external hiring becomes a substitute for strategy.

TALENT DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK — BUILD FROM WITHIN

- **Map current state honestly:** assess internal AI readiness before designing external hiring strategy
- **Define future state specifically:** articulate exactly what 'AI-ready' means for each role category
- **Create internal pathways:** capstone projects, AI tool access, internal mobility, learning stipends
- **Invest in institutional knowledge carriers:** those who understand systems, clients, and culture are irreplaceable
- **Design hybrid policy from your own data:** client satisfaction, collaboration needs, and talent market position — not peer benchmarks
- **Partner with academia:** Thapar's model — converting company problem statements into student capstone projects — creates pre-trained talent

Industry Spotlights

Healthcare: COVID's Technology Dividend

Santosh Marathe of Sterling Hospitals delivered the forum's most striking statistic: two weeks of COVID-19 accelerated more healthcare technology adoption than two decades of normal progress. The sector is now integrating robotics, AI-driven stroke management tools, clinical pathway software, genomic care platforms, and real-time clinical decision support systems.

Key Advances at Sterling Hospitals:

- Exhaustive alerts → actionable alerts (reducing alert fatigue)
- Dragon speech-to-text for clinical documentation
- Behavioural clustering for diabetic and renal patient cohorts
- Genomic care — proactive interventions for family cancer history
- Ayushman Bharat digital health highway integration

Social Purpose: Technology with a Conscience

Pawan Alamchandani of Prompt DairyTech offered the forum's most powerful reminder that technology's ultimate measure is human impact. Over three decades, Prompt's systems have enabled real-time milk collection and digital payments across thousands of villages, creating transparency and fair compensation for India's dairy farmers.

"Technology alone does not create impact. Empathy is essential for true progress. High-performance organisations are built on core values of collaboration, integrity, innovation, and empathy."

Pawan Alamchandani — CHRO, Prompt DairyTech

Academia–Industry Bridge: Thapar's Blueprint for Closing the Skills Gap

Thapar University's Dr. Urmi Mehta opened the forum by naming an uncomfortable truth: there is a 'huge gap' between student aspirations and recruiter requirements. After speaking to over 1,500 people in six months, the university has built a market-driven skills bank — identifying the competencies employers actually need versus those that academic curricula still teach.

Thapar's Industry Infrastructure

- Nvidia partnership — only university in India (3rd globally) with an on-campus data centre
- Volvo: Robotics, AI & intelligent automatic systems curriculum
- NXP: Chip design programme
- Future First: Financial derivatives & corporate finance
- Yotta (Sunil Gupta): Data centre professor of practice designing curriculum
- ISRO collaboration: First student satellite 'Tapers' in development
- 2 startups recently funded on Shark Tank India

The Partnership Proposition

Dr. Mehta's call to action was direct: share your problem statements. Thapar converts company use cases into student capstone projects — creating a pipeline of pre-trained graduates who have worked on real industry challenges before they enter the workforce. With 3,000 annual graduates — including 1,500 in computer science alone — alongside biotechnology, VLSI, chip design, chemical engineering, and liberal arts, Thapar's output spans exactly the multidisciplinary talent mix that AI-era organisations require.

The university's concept of 'intellectual humility' — acknowledging the need to reach out to the corporate world rather than assuming academic sufficiency — is itself a model for how organisations should approach the AI skills challenge.

Conclusion: Ahmedabad's Transformation Mandate

The SpeakIn Asia Dialogues Forum in Ahmedabad left no ambiguity about the moment India's enterprises are in. From banking to dairy to legal technology to EV infrastructure, every sector represented at this forum is already living through a transformation that has no pause button and no return path.

The leaders in the room were not debating whether to adopt AI. They were debating how to do so responsibly — without losing the human context that differentiates great organisations from merely efficient ones. Sudesh Jain's 25-year perspective was grounding: every technology wave created more work than it eliminated. Saurav Singhvi's scaffold metaphor was instructive: the right framing changes everything. And Kishore Upadhyay's Four T's framework was the clearest articulation of why so many transformation programmes underdeliver — they treat Talent, Technology, and Transformation as separate workstreams rather than an integrated system aimed at a single goal: business turnaround.

Ahmedabad has what it takes. The entrepreneurial culture, the industrial base, the emerging GIFT City ecosystem, the world-class pharmaceutical and manufacturing sector, and — as Thapar University demonstrated — an academic partner that is genuinely humble about the gap between classroom and boardroom. What the city's organisations must now do is make the internal investment — in their people, in their processes, and in the cultural conditions — that allows technology to deliver on its promise.

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES FOR AHMEDABAD'S ORGANISATIONS

- **Align the Four T's:** Ensure Talent, Technology, and Transformation are integrated workstreams aimed at the same business turnaround goal
- **Reframe AI adoption as scaffolding:** systematic programmes from frontline up, framed as enablers of better work not threats to employment
- **Build before you buy:** create internal talent development pathways before defaulting to external AI-ready hiring
- **Elevate GCC leaders:** move capability centre heads from the implementation table to the decision-making table now
- **Partner with academia:** share problem statements with Thapar and others — real-world capstone projects create pre-trained graduates
- **Technology must serve business goals:** measure every initiative by business value realised, not technical go-live achieved

Additional Voices from the Forum

"The bottleneck is not the pace of technology — it is the supporting structure. Organisations need to reduce friction by rethinking where decision-making authority lies and pushing it more to the edge. Compress loops, not by reducing hierarchy, but by rethinking roles. Leave out the titles and look at roles from the ground up."

Jaideep Chowdhary — Director Marketing, eInfochips

"Healthcare has successfully moved from exhaustive alerts to actionable alerts — because alerts can be overwhelming, and overwhelming a clinician is as dangerous as giving them no information at all. The next frontier is genomic care — proactive interventions for families exposed to genetic indispositions. That is a wonderful tool that only technology can enable."

Santosh Marathe — MD and CEO, Sterling Hospitals

"AI transformation is a once-in-a-century shift like the industrial revolution, reshaping software and knowledge work. Success depends on strong change management—driving awareness, upskilling, certifications, updated rewards, and cultural acceptance of AI-driven roles."

Bhavesh Mehta — Chief Delivery Officer, Apexon

"AI is overtaking us rather than us guiding AI into productivity. We need to push technology without hustling people — we need to provide psychological security and some basics of human life to improve productivity alongside it."

Sankalp Shakunt — CHRO, TDS Lithium-Ion Battery Gujarat

"High-performance organisations are built on core values of collaboration, integrity, innovation, and empathy — and those values together create ownership and sustainable success. In a world of rapid technological change, agility and the right culture are not soft advantages. They are the foundation."

Pawan Alamchandani — CHRO, Prompt DairyTech

"Successful transformation depends not just on technology but on managing people, expectations, and leadership mindset effectively. The organisations that get this right are the ones that treat transformation as a people programme that happens to use technology — not a technology programme that has a people problem."

Nirav Brahmbbhatt — Co-Founder & CEO, Inospire Consultancy

Forum Participants — Ahmedabad Edition 2026

Participant	Title	Organisation
Sankalp Shakunt	Chief Human Resources Officer	TDS Lithium-Ion Battery Gujarat
Arth Patel	Co-Founder & CEO	Tirex Transmission (Hinduja Group)
Jaideep Chowdhary	Director — Marketing	eInfochips (An Arrow Company)
Bhupendra Pant	Chief Technology Officer	Patel Infrastructure Limited
Dr. Ankita Singh	Chief People Officer & Board Member	Relevance Lab
Santosh Marathe	MD & CEO	Sterling Hospitals
Saurav Singhvi	Managing Director	Lexera
Sudesh Jain	COO — GCC	Adani Group
Kishore Upadhyay	Director — Factory & SCM	Otsuka Pharmaceutical
Pawan Alamchandani	CHRO	Prompt DairyTech
Bhavesh Mehta	Chief Delivery Officer	Apexon
Ravindra Misra	Chief Product Officer	OPLinnovate
Nirav Brahmbbhatt	Co-Founder & CEO	Inospire Consultancy
Dr. Urmi Mehta	Chief Industry Engagement Officer	Thapar Institute of Engineering & Technology
Surabhi Shrivastava	Moderator	SpeakIn — Asia Dialogues Forum

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Asia Dialogues Forum is a curated platform bringing together Asia's top 1% of leaders from business, bureaucracy, academia, and media to shape conversations on the continent's future. Through invitation-only roundtables across major Asian cities, the forum creates high-trust environments for substantive dialogue on technology, talent, policy, and transformation.

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