

Center for Strategic and International Studies

TRANSCRIPT

Event

Exploring Global AI Policy Priorities Ahead of the India AI
Impact Summit

**“Panel 3 - Industry Perspectives on AI Innovation in
India”**

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FEATURING

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Richard M.
Rossow:

All right, friends. This is the final panel, although it will be followed, of course, by our president of our department, Navin Girishankar, after this. But here to talk about the private sector view for all this.

And can't ask for something better than two of the companies that have been referenced multiple times already for making really significant investments in datacenters and AI. But also, of course, you know, we get all excited about the big announcements by the global investors, but every single day it's the Indian companies that are really kind of driving the domestic business environment. And having Poornima Shenoy, my friend who is the representative for North America from FICCI, which represents most of India's large companies and industry, it's terrific to be here. She's joined, of course, as I mentioned, by two great colleagues, Khalil Gharbieh from – senior director of trade policy for Microsoft; and David Weller, senior director of emerging tech, competitiveness, and sustainability at Google – so, again, two companies that have made massive announcements in recent months ahead of the AI Summit.

And of course, we're all waiting to see what else is going to be announced at the floor of the summit. As Greg was talking about earlier, France was really kind of a stimulant, I think, for a lot of companies to make big investment announcements. But always good to get ahead of the pack and announce it before everybody's on the main stage, I guess.

But, Khalil, let me start with you. I mean, I think a lot of us are looking towards global forums, most recently the World Economic Forum, a lot of top executives out there. And I think at the WEF you saw a bit of an eruption to some extent onstage, a debate over what is India's kind of global heft today as an AI player. But Microsoft's making big bets, so when you think about India as a player today – both as a market, as a development, a datacenter – like, how does it fit in your strategy today? How do you look at India's role for AI globally in the future, from your lens?

Khalil Gharbieh,
JD:

Yeah. And you know, one thing that I wanted to mention – well, thanks. Thanks, Rick. It's great to be here. A lot to discuss.

I mean, on this topic, we really look at it as a matter of AI diffusion. And there is a report that our AI Economy Institute puts out that is really based on this key insight that it's not necessarily the country that invents the technology, but the one that diffuses it most quickly and deeply across its economy that's going to grow and benefit the most. And you know, we're tracking that across all countries and looking at drivers. Which – you know, some of them that are already coming up pretty clearly are the skills and sort of digital readiness of the population, how much is the government leaning into AI adoption in the public sector, and how strong

are leading LLMs in the local language. And there's more. There's just a lot of rich data there.

The UAE and Singapore, with over 60 percent adoption, are sort of the North Star or leading the pack. The U.S. is actually 24th. A lot more work to do on diffusion here.

India's diffusion level was about consistent with the global norm, which is actually quite impressive for the massive size of India's population. And we'll talk a little bit more about our investment and the way that we think India's positioned, but we really think that India is uniquely well-positioned to grow and has the right – the right strategy. You know, in the exchange you mentioned earlier, that full stack approach and emphasis on broadening access to the technology.

Mr. Rossow: Yeah. Within an industry, I think, to a lot of Americans, you think, first and foremost, the brands that we know, the companies that are these global titans. You think Reliance and Tada. And some have shown an incredible nimbleness on moving into high-tech areas. Adani, which, you know, you think about it's a hydrocarbon company, but also now data centers and communications and such. So a lot of nimbleness by the big companies. But one of the quiet revolutions, I think, that you've seen in recent years are overt attempts in India to try to create a better ecosystem for startups. And what a time for that to be happening, when you've got a lot of new technologies kind of on the table. So, Poornima, of my I wonder if you could tell us a little bit about the India startup ecosystem and maybe some of the green shoots you're seeing that kind of relate to artificial intelligence and overlap with some of the topics we have on the table today.

Poornima Shenoy, MBA: Thanks, Rick. I sometimes think that Rick and CSIS has more accurate data on India than anybody else. (Laughter.) OK, and –

Mr. Rossow: Let's tweet that one out pretty quickly. (Laughter.) Let's get that on social medias, yeah.

Ms. Shenoy: (Laughs.) OK. And, of course, Google and Microsoft are such household names in India, especially in the job market. So it's a pleasure and an honor for me to share the stage with you.

So I'm from Bangalore, which is the startup capital of India. I have to say this. And I have to plug it in at every platform. (Laughter.) So let me give you some data on what is the investment that is going into AI startups in India, especially from VCs who are mainly based in the U.S.? In 2025, we saw 1.54 billion put into seed-stage funding, 444 million into early-stage funding, and 320 into late-stage funding. So these are only into AI-related

startups. And this is a very good and rapidly evolving number. In India, we see the usage of AI number one in banking. I think we have a very robust financial and banking system. It's followed by IT industry, then by healthcare, then the retail sector, finally, manufacturing and traditional sectors.

So these are large, publicly traded companies, especially the banks. You know, either public sector enterprises or publicly traded institutions, which don't have the time to develop tools and applications for their customers either at the enterprise level or at the retail level. So this is – this gap is being met by startups. And so we are seeing startups also evolving in these particular sectors. For example, number one is enterprise and SaaS. But what I'm particularly excited about, and this is more at an eye level, is the development of AI in healthcare. So India has very few doctors per capita. When I see the U.S., it is such an exciting number. We also have very large number of patients. And we have administrative hassles. This is being met by AI.

And unlike the U.S., you know, which goes through many iterations and finally comes out with the perfect product, in India often AI tools are on the go. They will evolve. They will improvise. And ROI is expected within 12 to 24 months. So healthcare, I think, is a sector where we are going to see more and more of it. I also see countries like Korea, which are coming to India and using the India model and perfecting it, because they get data from India which they can put into their great models. So this is what's happening in the startup space as far as AI goes in India.

Mr. Rossow

I think whoever coins the perfect term connecting AI and Jugaad, you know, which is, like, on the go innovation, is going to – going to become a very famous person. And if you – if you want to believe in unicorns, as Poornima kind of hinted, India is not a bad place to go looking for them, with those tech startups that have managed to kind of break out of the pack.

But getting back to, you know, some of the big companies, big investments, you know, just for those that don't have a lot of familiarity with India, on a good year the country attracts somewhere around the range of \$50 to \$60 billion in foreign direct investment, in recent years. And you saw \$80 billion approximately in investment of announcements by just three companies in recent months, two of which are on stage. Google kind of got the ball rolling with the announcement of 15 billion (dollars) over five years. And, you know, Greg and I were down in Visakhapatnam a few months ago at an investor summit just on the backs of that. And you'd almost think we worked for Google the number of questions that we got trying to answer, why India? Why that big? Why the state of Andhra Pradesh? But I wondered if you can talk a little bit about

Google's view, why making such a big bet? How does it fit into the plans today and in the future?

David Weller, JD: Yeah. Well, for those of you who had a chance to listen to the first two and a half hours of the conference this morning, that kind of – if I could – if I could synthesize that into one sentence, that is the reason. I think we heard such a clear-eyed vision from the Indian ambassador, from the principal science advisor about India's vision that is really focused on widespread adoption of AI, and a recognition that this is a transformative, kind of once in a generation, or, you know, once in a multi-century, kind of technology.

And I think what's distinctive about India – it's not unique, but I think it's among the governments that have recognized this and then are also kind of walking the talk – is that the ultimate focus is not – and the measure of AI is not going to be what happens in an AI Lab and what happens on the leader boards, as much as, you know, we are all focused on those kinds of things and reaching new technical milestones. It's going to be how it's deployed.

And, you know, I think the summit is a great encapsulation of that. And, you know, the word "impact" is the most important part of the name of the summit. And the Indian government really has focused on achieving this across three different areas, which I think is part of the reason that we made the kind of commitment that we did, and you see other companies as well. The first is setting up both, kind of, the soft and hard infrastructure that's needed for widespread deployment.

So, of course, India was a pioneer in setting up the Aadhaar system more than a decade ago, the digital identity system, and then building sort of a payment system on top of that, and now is building out a whole suite of digital public infrastructure, some of which Google is partnering with the Indian government on to make sure that these different digital and AI tools are widely available. On the hard infrastructure, likewise. The Indian government has really spent a lot of time in building up power, for instance, and part of our investment, in addition to gigawatt data centers, was on clean energy to power that. Sub-sea cables was another part of our investment. So that hard and soft infrastructure is so important.

The second area is readiness, and really the focus that, both at the enterprise level, and, you know, like, members of FICCI, as well as individuals across society, this is going to require real, concerted public-private partnership and government engagement to ensure that we are ready for this massive transformation. And, again, companies like Google, Microsoft, others, are very engaged in partnering on these issues. And you see the government very focused on that.

And then the third piece is really governance and an enabling framework. And, again, there was a lot of discussion on this earlier today. And I think the Indian government, at a high level, has set out a very, very strong, innovation-oriented vision for how AI should be – should be managed. And I think a recognition – I think maybe Dean Ball referenced this on the earlier panel – that, you know, AI is an underlying field of science and technology, right? It's not – the notion that you have, like, a one big single cathedral-like law to govern AI I think is a little bit of a misapprehension of what AI is. And so really leaning on a flexible governance framework that leans into existing regulation.

You know, we don't agree on everything within – as in any government. One issue that's been very hot recently has been a proposal around copyright and AI from the Indian government, which I think both right holders, AI companies, others, all have concerns about. So there are some exceptions, but in general, the governance framework has been very positive. So for all three of those reasons, India has been a great partner and home for AI investment.

Mr. Rossow: Yeah. Yeah. Khalil, I mean, you touched on this a little bit by talking about your terrific AI adoption report, but it's easy to say, ditto. But anything you want to kind of add, in terms of Microsoft? Also significant commitment. I mean, you've been so deep as a company in India for a long period of time, including in the south where – I was out there for when you created your first big facility in the HITEC City in Hyderabad. So anything you want to kind of add on the today, the tomorrow view on why you made such a big bet on India?

Mr. Gharbieh: Yeah. I mean, definitely, ditto to start. (Laughter.) But no, there's – we see the potential, right? We see India as an AI hub. Our investment – we made two investment announcements at the beginning of last year, \$3 billion to start and then in December the 17.5 billion (dollars), which is our largest-ever investment in – anywhere in Asia. And that goes to the potential we see to accelerate AI diffusion into India, to provide that infrastructure, but also to partner with the Indian government to – you know, David mentioned identity, things that they've done in digital infrastructure around identity and payments sort of show the – show the path forward on how you can broaden access to AI technology.

So very excited about all of that, and we think that the key ingredient is going to be skilling the population, so along with our investment we've committed first to 10 million and now to 20 million people that will be skilled in a variety of different channels and through different partnerships, whether that's basic digital literacy or more specialized

skills for those that are in IT, sector-specific skills for those in other sectors, as part of that effort.

Mr. Rossow: I will probably sign on to be part of that course if it's open to me.

But, yeah, I mean, energy, it came up also at the World Economic Forum; whoever wins the energy prize for low-cost energy is likely to also be a key winner, I think, for the AI prize. It came up, a couple of speeches at Davos as well.

You know, part of something that David had brought up, you know, in terms of regulations are you got top-line regulations – we saw this in the data fights a lot of times. In India I managed the IT committee at USIBC for many years where, you know, is it kind of a European approach and more rigid? Is it more open like the United States? Where does Indian industry hope that things kind of land in terms of AI governance, where – a more open model that allows a lot of international flows and then they take advantage or closed for that ecosystem? But is there kind of a view that Indian industry is developing on AI regulation that you can share?

Ms. Shenoy: Very broadly. What I would say is it's going to be a kind of combination. May not be as regulated as Europe, but I think the U.S. is giving certain guidelines, and I've attended a lot of events in D.C. where U.S. is very clearly wanting to control the regulation and the guidelines and I think India falls somewhere in between.

If I look at it from an industry perspective, they're worried that it should not be fragmented, that jurisdiction should not change with geographies, and the smaller companies also worry that, you know, if it means a lot of compliance it's going to affect their bottom lines.

So in a country which has so much of diversity in terms of size of business as well as languages and states and different political alignments, it's a delicate balance for the country and the government.

Mr. Rossow: Yeah, we've seen this in India on the data debate where you looked at an IT act and, of course, the digital personal data protection bill, but also a lot of the sectoral regulators – you know, sometimes they've got regulations on – like, in the insurance industry there's outsourcing regulations. In banking it was payments regulation, which wasn't a data control top line but in practice it kind of was. Copyrights inaction as well that – so there's a lot of – of course, different players are going to have a say in this too, so it's not always – in a democracy with a lot of voices there's not always just

a house view as well. You can have a lot of players and that's a good way to kind of characterize.

You know, companies when they're – when they're making their advocacy they want to talk about the good they present to the country, and sometimes it's a stretch and other times, like, when we talk about artificial intelligence it is right on point, the opportunity for AI to be a tool to kind of unlock great promise for the expansion of social services to people and developing great good.

You know, for – David, let me ask for Google's view. When you think about AI as a tool for development, a way that companies can both be profitable but also help companies meet their objectives, like, are there some areas that you think hold kind of the most promise or the things that Google looks at right now – health education, whatever it is – that you think are really the first things that countries, like, in the Global South are going to be able to achieve from that?

Mr. Weller:

You know, well, I think the most critical point is that AI is a general purpose technology and so it is enabling new kinds of understanding of insights across any domain. So I think it's less what – you know, what is AI going to do. I would start more from what are the critical challenges that we are facing, and that's going to differ by country. So I don't think there's – you know, there's one answer to that.

You know, I'll give – I'll give two or three examples of the kinds of challenges that many – India and many other countries are facing and how AI is helping to address them. One would be kind of climate events, right, and floods and wildfires and, you know, we all watch, you know, every week, month in our news feeds, you know, really heart-wrenching stories.

And what's so critical about these kinds of events is advanced notice, right, and, for instance, floods, something like – the World Bank had a report a couple of years ago, you know, a fifth of the world's population are in areas that have serious flood risk. One-fifth.

And we developed a number of years ago something – the underlying technology was developed at Google DeepMind and then it was ultimately kind of productized through something called FloodHub, which uses all kinds of geospatial data, floodplain data, weather data, to build a really sophisticated model to better predict floods and to give – to be able to give people advanced notice as much as seven days in advance, which is the difference between a community saving itself or not.

And that is now – there’s open APIs on it. Many governments are using it. Seven hundred million people around the world are now – can potentially get those notices and it’s made real differences. So that’s one example.

You know, another example is around health, right, and every – this is, you know, top – it’s the most personal important thing for anyone, at the end of the day, and so the particular kind of health challenge at any particular society will differ but, you know, if you talk about – and you were mentioning before the shortage of doctors in India and many other countries, particularly in rural areas.

I’ll give one example. A very large population around the world has diabetes, right, and about half the people with diabetes are at serious risk for something called diabetic retinopathy, which is when caught early can be addressed, when caught late causes blindness, and it’s – if you have access to an ophthalmologist and so forth you can get screened for this. Many people don’t.

And so, again, we developed technology that through analyzing a simple image of the retina can detect this much earlier, and we’ve deployed this in India and Thailand and a number of other countries where even in rural environments people are able to get diagnosed very early.

So those are just a couple of examples, and I could go on and on and on. But I guess my bottom line point is there are lots of intractable or seemingly intractable problems that we are all facing. Some are global and common. Many are different by country, and that’s where we begin and then we need to think about how can AI help address them.

Mr. Rossow:

Yeah, I love the health care example. You know, we’ve been leading a project – Kathy Hadda, Anjali Kaur, looking at health care in India – and AI has tremendous promise today in diagnosis.

But the question then comes up, what about treatment? But you bring up a great point. Catch things early and the opportunities to treat are so much easier and more cost effective – the fear about dramatic expansion in diagnosis without commensurate, you know, improvements in treatment.

But the threshold on helping a lot of folks is a lot less if you catch it early. So I love, you know, you kind of pulling that thread.

Mr. Weller:

Yeah, and I will just say on treatment AI is having a huge effect, too. I mean, it’s the reason to – Google DeepMind leaders won the Nobel Prize last year, which was for AlphaFold, and right now there are a number of drugs in trial – cancer treatment, other vaccines – that I think will deal

and already are dealing with actually disease treatment. So I think there's tremendous AI potential there.

Mr. Rossow: Is male pattern baldness on that list or is that a little further down?
(Laughter.)

Mr. Weller: I bet – I bet it – I bet it's way at the top, I'm sorry to say. (Laughter.)

Mr. Rossow: Way at the top. All right. All right. All right. I'll still keep shaving –
(inaudible, laughter) – but, no, thanks for that.

You know, taking the aperture back a little bit to the summit itself, you know, from Microsoft's vantage point. We've seen multiple summits, changes sometimes in sort of the direction of the focus, safety. Of course, a lot of commercial announcements.

What does Microsoft – what do you kind of hope to see from the summit and are there things that you don't want to see? Are there things where governments getting together sometimes can be seen as overreach?

So upside, and if you've got any views on downside of this monster convening India is about to host?

Mr. Gharbieh: Yeah. No, it's – David touched on this earlier, right. I think that the frame of impact is exactly what we would encourage, because it's only through seeing the applications that can be built on the technology, some of these things in health and agriculture and other areas that are not the first ones that you think of when you think of model development, that are going to provide us sort of the license to operate and the license to use so much capital, energy, and other resources. And so, you know, the fact that Ambassador Kwatra and India have emphasized today, you know, the application layer, access, that to us is the key, key focus area.

So we're very excited about the summit. We're very supportive of, you know, what India will bring in terms of sustained focus to AI diffusion for the Global South and the world. And you know, we'd like to see a specific focus on local governments in adopting mechanisms that help them deploy AI in essential services. We'd like to see a focus on – one thing that Ambassador Kwatra mentioned, on providing not just compute but structure, datasets, other tools that allow everyone to participate in developing the technology.

Mr. Rossow: You know, Poornima, you know, when you think about, like, a dinner party, it's fun to go to them; it's also pretty nice to host once in a while. India's hosting. FICCI, the massive chamber of commerce positioned right downtown in Delhi, when you think about all these world leaders and

businesses coming together, what sort of things does FICCI have in mind? And when you think of good things and bad things that might come out of the summit itself, what's kind of at the top of your list?

Ms. Shenoy: I think it's about using the room. You have policymakers, you have industry leaders, you have all kinds of profiles in that room, so use the room not just for having a chat but get measurable outcomes. I think that will be so very important. You know, we're all talking about this great event, but I would like to see some measurable outcomes.

Also, you know, you have AI for women and AI for children, which is good but it should go beyond symbolism. What is going to be the impact over there?

And I think this is one of the few times that India gets to be part of decision-making early on. This is something I would like our people to leverage: How can we be part of the process early on rather than just adapting it for services later on?

Mr. Rossow: Yeah. Yeah, some of the things I've seen in my private life, too, not just women and children but the elderly – you know, AI as a tool to help the elderly grow old more gracefully. And there's things already that are out there right now that kind of help and enable. So, you know, a lot of great topics, too, that sometimes get underplayed. And you see some – because India we think of as relatively young, but actually the aging population is quite large.

David, anything from Google's view you want to add in terms of hopes and concerns, if there are any, for the summit?

Mr. Weller: Yeah. I'll mostly do a ditto, but – (laughter) – I guess I'll do a ditto in my own words. (Laughter.)

Look, I do think – and I agree it's always good to have concrete deliverables, but I do think there is kind of a meta deliverable that India has – is already in the process of delivering, which is a real change in the conversation and focus on accessibility, on access, and the Global South. And India did that – you know, has done that in the G-20 chairmanship and then two years ago when they hosted the GPAI. They were – they were the host of it for a year, and I had the chance to be in New Delhi for that a couple of years ago, where the conversation around AI governance was all heavily just OECD-focused, just kind of the North-focused. So I think just this real changing of the conversation or broadening of the conversation itself is super important.

I think the second thing I would say is learning from each other, right? I mean, I think many governments are struggling with the same challenges. There's a high point version of governance, which maybe was, you know, so 2023. You know, it's – (laughter) – we're in a little bit of a different environment now, and you know, you probably wouldn't have something like the G-7 co-developed right now in this environment. But there's still a lot that can be learned from each other, both on the adoption side, diffusion side, and on the – kind of the governance side.

And on the adoption side, I know one thing that's being talked about at the summit is really putting together kind of a repository of AI for good use cases that different governments are using and how they're going about approaching those, what kinds of public-private partnerships, and so on and so forth, so that learning from each other.

And then on kind of more of the governance side and the responsible AI side, there was some talk from the – from the Indian government presenters before about India's work on developing kind of techno-legal approaches to responsible AI and, again, kind of sharing what are some of those best practices, what are important kind of standards development at ISO and other places that we should all be aligning around.

So those would be two things I'd – two additional things I'd hope we get out of the summit.

Mr. Rossow: Yeah. Good.

I know another issue that's going to come up quite a bit at the summit – and I'll just ask all three if they have thoughts on it as well; we've got about 10 minutes left on the panel – but is on the stress, if there is a stress, between AI and employment. Poornima, I wonder if you can take this on first. Like, when this issue is brought on the table as it always is, like, how do you kind of respond to that on what industry is going to do? Are they going to be able to adapt to keep up? Are there things they should be doing right now? Is there an agenda for the AI Impact Summit that kind of, you know, helps to alleviate this potential stress on the unemployment? So how does it come up in your work, in FICCI's thinking?

Ms. Shenoy: So when we think of India, it's not just electronics and IT and ITS. We are also talking of jewelry and garments and a lot of sectors that use AI, especially nowadays in design and it's seeping into manufacturing. About 28 percent of manufacturers in the country are already using AI in some form or the other.

So when we talk of AI in the U.S., for example, you have Social Security, so if people are laid off they will get some amount of support at different

levels. You also have retraining programs, and you have strong institutions that stand by it. But India also has a large informal (cadre as well, to say ?). So not missing out on your monthly income is crucial, and I think that will be the real differentiator if we are – it has to be fast and the replacement are getting people to earn money. If they are going to lose out from the incoming AI wave, if I may say, has to be very, very fast.

You know, political regimes can fall if people don't get money every month. We're not a social – we don't have Social Security in India. So if you don't have a job and you don't earn salary, you have no money that month. So this, I think, will be a very important factor that should be kept in mind.

Mr. Rossow: Keeping a close eye on the divide, right?

Ms. Shenoy: Yes.

Mr. Rossow: Yeah. Yeah, no, that's good.

Khalil, thoughts?

Mr. Gharbieh: Yeah. I mean, I think it's a huge issue, one that will require sustained focus here and beyond. There is – there is a risk of displacement. It's uneven. There are – different professions will be impacted differently. It's something that LinkedIn is very focused on, researching those changes. It's a shared responsibility industry and government have because it won't just be the technology; it'll also be the policy response to some of the technology displacement that will really matter.

So we're working with school systems and labor unions on their sort of strategy to adopting technology and preparing for technology. In India, actually one of – one of our key partnerships with the government and use cases is in adding AI technology to the – to e-Shram and National Career Service, so using AI models to help with job matching and to help with bringing over 300 million people that are in the informal economy into formal employment.

Mr. Rossow: Yeah.

David, anything on that?

Mr. Weller: Yeah. I mean, maybe first on the question of just what the – what the likely impact is going to be, I mean, I think we see a very wide range of predictions from, you know, it's going to eliminate all jobs or half of jobs to it's just going to create jobs. You know, to paraphrase the old saying,

you know, predictions are very difficult, especially about the future.
(Laughter.)

But I do think we can learn something from history. I mean, we have gone through these kinds of big technological changes before which do change work in important fundamental ways, but on balance have ultimately created work and created more jobs. When you think about in the United States, something like 60 percent of Americans are in jobs today the job categories for which did not exist in 1945. So, you know, a dynamic economy will have those kinds of transitions. And you think about, you know, the second industrialization and sort of mechanization of agriculture, that was a huge shift and you did see a lot of jobs eliminated, but you saw many, many other jobs created. And it's often I think what's difficult about this point, both as a political matter but also just as a predictive matter, is it's much easier to see the things that are going to be impacted than the new things that are going to be created, right?

But I think the bottom line is, like, some jobs are going to be lost. Some jobs are going to be gained – new job categories gained and created that we can't even think about. And then a lot of jobs are going to be changed. And so in a way I think the most important part of the debate goes to what you both were talking about, which is, yes, we need to do as much prognostication as we can, but we know there's going to be a huge transformation. And so ensuring that our enterprises and our individuals and our social safety nets, as you were alluding to, are all evolving to address these issues, and things like making sure that not just people in companies like Google and Microsoft, but across all industries, are getting schooled in AI. And again, you know, there's sort of the adage of – one of my colleagues says, you know, you're not going to lose a job to AI, but you might lose your job to someone using AI who's using it better. (Laughter.) So.

Mr. Rossow: Yeah, it was very heartwarming when my son's high school here in town started an AI committee to think about, by the time he's graduating college, how are jobs going to change? I love the fact that you do see some thinking now that it's real, it's going to have an impact. We do have a few minutes, if there's a –

Ms. Shenoy: I wanted to add one point to what he was saying. And I wanted to give a shoutout to the Wadhvani Foundation. The Wadhvani institution has been in India for more than two decades. And I like the way they're using AI for social impact and for upskilling, and how they are going to help skill a new generation of worker. I mean, a big shoutout to them.

Mr. Rossow: Yeah. Appreciate that.

Do we have any questions from the audience? If you do, I see – you grab whoever hand you saw first. If you don't mind letting us know who you are and keeping it pretty tight. And if you have a specific panelist in mind.

Ms. Shenoy: Please direct all the questions there. (Laughter.)

Audience Member (1): Chris Gorin, I'm with TaiwanPlus News.

I have actually kind of two related questions about open source. So Dr. Wadhvani said at the top that likely India will focus its innovation on applications and not frontier models. I think a logical conclusion is that that means they'll be using a lot of open-source models as the basis. And so we wanted to first ask Poornima, you know, what's the view of Chinese open-source models among startups in India? Because obviously I think, at least in the U.S., there's a lot of different types of concerns about Chinese models. So I'm just wondering if it's the same in India. And then for the rest of the panel, you know, I know that Google has Gemma and Microsoft you have Phi, and some other products, but do you think that the U.S. labs should be investing more, or perhaps making a greater priority that they don't fall behind in open-source, to catch a big market like India?

Mr. Rossow: Open source. India first, and then U.S. view. Yeah.

Ms. Shenoy: Yeah. So I may not have a direct answer for your question. But the way I see it is if companies are working on government projects, or maybe they're working in space and aerospace and in those – in defense, it would be preferred if they were using indigenous technology, or maybe from countries like the U.S., which have been adapted for India. I'll stop over there. I hope you get the message. (Laughter.)

Mr. Rossow: More to unpack after. She'll make herself available for the quiet chats. (Laughs.)

Mr. Weller: So I think you're right that ultimately for widespread AI diffusion you're going to need a mix of proprietary and open-source or open-weight models. And that's certainly been the approach at Google. You mentioned our Gemma models. I think every company makes their own determination about what they – what they either open source or make model weights available, and not. And in our case, things that are at the very frontier, for various reasons, we don't make those weights available. But the Gemma models are very powerful. And you have, you know, many, many hundreds of thousands of developers and enterprises, including across India, using and building on top of them.

I would also say, like, I think the narrative that, oh, the U.S. does kind of closed, proprietary weights, China does open, is not quite right. I mean, there's a lot of – there are a lot of models being developed in the U.S. beyond, you know, just the companies on the stage, and then a couple of other companies. It's a really rich ecosystem.

Mr. Rossow: Yeah. We have time for one more. I think I saw a couple hands over on the side, so, yeah, right at the end of the hall. So, again, who you are, who you're addressing, and keep it tight.

Audience member (2): Hi. My name is Abhishek, and I'm a lawyer.

My question is, like you mentioned that there are massive investments going into India from both Microsoft and Google. So can you give us a little more insight into how the investments that you are making in India integrate with your global AI strategy? And you're welcome to address either the specific technologies you're developing or the specific sectors you're looking to impact. Thank you.

Mr. Rossow: Great. I'll let – you want to start?

Mr. Gharbieh: Yeah. The investment is in infrastructure and in expanding existing infrastructure. So we'll have multiple regions, we already have some regions, in India. And then, you know, providing that service where, you know, India and SMEs and others, companies in the market, can leverage the technology, right? And so this was the case with cloud. It's even more of the case with AI's, that this infrastructure is the platform. That, you know, once you add your data that unlocks new economic possibilities. And it's available for startups. It's available to scale up. And so that's really – the division is investing in providing that infrastructure in India.

Mr. Rossow: You want to add?

Mr. Weller: Yeah. I would just say, I mean, you think about it as, you know, where are we training AI models? Where are we – where do we need inference for our consumer products and the many people who are using Google or other AI services? And then our enterprise customers, some of which might be AI companies themselves, using our infrastructure or – you know, or government agencies. So I think with India, it's, you know, the combination of all of those things.

Mr. Rossow: Well, Poornima, Khalil, David, really can't thank you enough. I mean, it is something, on a day like today with the way the city has been after this tremendous storm, to make time out on a Friday to come and spend time and offer views, and have an audience this large, both here and online, to be able to take advantage of that. So to the audience, please join me in

thanking our panelists for this great discussion. (Applause.) And hopefully you'll be able to stick around. We have our closing keynote from my boss. So please stick around for that. Navin Girishankar, to be followed by lunch. But thank you.

(END.)