A TRULY DIGITAL BUDGET

Security-Driven Networking, everywhere you need it.

Protect the possibilities
with Secure SD-WAN.

CONTENT

BUDGET 2022-23

A TRULY DIGITAL BUDGET

Under the cloud of the Omicron wave, finance minister NirmalaSitharaman presented the Budget for 2022-23, which has brought several initiatives and proposals to capitalize on the MSME and startup momentum. The Budget's key aspects included a projected growth rate of 9.2 percent, the highest among all global countries, the creation of 60 lakh employment across 14 sectors, and great push towards digitization across the sectors. So, let's look at how the Budget is poised to serve the MSME and Startup sectors?

Amit Singh

The recent Union Budget 2022 has magnified the 'Digital India' vision and importance of technology in all focus areas like infrastructure, inclusive development, sustainability, sunrise industries, and skilling. Indeed, technology firms and startups focused on new-age platforms will likely be at the vanguard of the list of beneficiaries as the Budget seeks to democratize technology in a concerted push toward digitization.

In her Budget speech, Finance Minister NirmalaSitharaman used the word 'digital' 35 times while 'tech' was mentioned 26 times. She proposed several initiatives, with technology as the pivot, to boost a wide swathe of sectors such as skilling, agriculture, education, mental health, logistics or bolstering small and medium enterprises. The fresh digital push and the reliance on green energy and mobility are seen as building blocks of the government's strategy to prepare the economy for future challenges.

"The Union Budget 2022 is technology-focused and will be a catalyst for growth. It is apparent from this Budget that we are on track to achieve our objective of a truly digital India. The adoption of emerging technologies like blockchain and artificial intelligence in the RBI-backed Digital Rupee, E-Passports, Geospatial Systems, etc. will be a game-changer in terms of strengthening the country's economy," shares Dharmender Kapoor, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, Birlasoft.

"As we continue to digitally transform, the focus on bolstering digital payments with a consumer-friendly lens, will continue to augment digital adoption across regional India. As a knowledge economy, I cannot emphasize enough on the importance of skilling to lead the digital disruption. Initiatives to drive skilling, reskilling and up-skilling, digitally, will ensure we are ready for the digital future much ahead of the curve," secondsArundhati Bhattacharya, Chairperson and CEO, Salesforce India.

The Union Budget focuses on three pillars of inclusive welfare, digital transformation and sustainability and leveraging private investments. All aimed at pivoting the country from the pandemic towards 'India @100.' Aptly referred to by many

as the 'Budget for Digital India', the announcements come as a welcome step for the tech and start-up ecosystem in India. Given the government's focus on technology across sectors, India's IT sector welcomed Union Budget 2022-23. The industry believes that the government has recognized technology as the key to India's growth that will pave way for a tech-enabled digital economy.

"The Budget reiterates the government's focus on new-age technologies,

" As we continue to digitally transform, the focus on bolstering digital payments with a consumer-friendly lens, will continue to augment digital adoption across regional India. **"**

ARUNDHATI BHATTACHARYA,
Chairperson and CEO, Salesforce India

" The adoption of emerging technologies like blockchain and artificial intelligence in the RBI-backed Digital Rupee, E-Passports, Geospatial Systems, etc. will be a game-changer in terms of strengthening the country's economy. **"**

DHARMENDER KAPOOR,
Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, Birlasoft

infrastructure, and comprehensive development, which will help India maintain sustainable growth momentum. The proposed initiatives around 5G, deep tech, digital rupee, and skilling will prove to be a game-changer, thereby furthering the digital India dream. Incentives boosting the start-up ecosystem will be the bedrock of innovation and growth drivers for the Indian economy," commentsJagdishMitra, Chief Strategy Officer and Head-Growth, Tech Mahindra.

As expected, thanks to digital tech's incredible support in helping India

Inc. brave the pandemic, this year's Budget takes a 'digital first' stance. A significant focus on new initiatives and progressive policy interventions, such as opening defense R&D, promoting drone start-ups, digital university, giving datacenters infra status will propel further adoption of technology across industries," highlights DayapatraNevatia, COO and President, Infogain.

He further adds, "I believe digital literacy will be the key to realizing India's 5 trillion-dollar economy dream. To create a digital ecosystem for skilling and focus on digital inclusion through 5G and investment in technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and infrastructure, the government will continue strengthening the development of entrepreneurship, productivity, and quality of IT talent in the country, thereby scaling the adoption of new-age technologies across industries."

"The announcement of data centers being awarded an infrastructure status is truly commendable as this

" A significant focus on new initiatives and progressive policy interventions, such as opening defense R&D, promoting drone start-ups, digital university, giving datacenters infra status will propel further adoption of technology across industries. "

DAYAPATRA NEVATIA,
COO and President, Infogain

" The Budget reiterates the government's focus on new-age technologies, infrastructure, and comprehensive development, which will help India maintain sustainable growth momentum. "

JAGDISH MITRA,
Chief Strategy Officer and Head-Growth, Tech Mahindra

move will be a major thrust to data localization. The new status will enable the data center sector to get credit at competitive rates and on a long-term basis with enhanced limits. This move will also be a catalyst in realizing India's vision of attaining the position of a global data center hub," says Paresh Shah, CEO, Allied Digital.

Rajesh Maurya, Regional Vice President, India and SAARC, Fortinet underlines that the Government has made a strong economic statement with its focus on public investments to

> **" The announcement of data centers being awarded an infrastructure status is truly commendable as this move will be a major thrust to data localization. It will be a catalyst in realizing India's vision of becoming a global data center hub. "**
>
> **PARESH SHAH,**
> CEO, Allied Digital

> **" Forward looking and catering to an aspirational Digital India the Budget lays its emphasis on technology with the launch of Digital Currency using blockchain, Digital University for education in different Indian languages, roll out of 5G and boost to Start-ups. "**
>
> **RAJESH MAURYA,**
> Regional Vice President, India and SAARC, Fortinet

spur growth. "Forward looking and catering to an aspirational Digital India the Budget once again lays its emphasis on technology with the launch of Digital Currency using blockchain, Digital University for education in different Indian languages, roll out of 5G and boost to Start-ups," he explains.

Further, the government's proposal of setting up 75

Digital Banking units in 75 districts of the country and providing online fund transfer between post office accounts and bank accounts will help in adding further tailwinds to expand necessary banking services to the last mile. "This enables us to take a step further towards our goal of financial inclusion through rural empowerment. The government's continuous focus on the digital payments ecosystem has paved the way for digital adoption amongst the unbanked and under-banked population of the country especially post the outbreak of the pandemic," details DilipModi, Founder, Spice Money.

" Budget offers a fantastic boost to the MSME segment, which will help this sector increase its contribution closer on 40 percent of India's GDP. **"**

RAJARSHI BHATTACHARYYA,
Co-Founder, Chairman and MD, ProcessIT Global

" The extension of the ECLGS scheme will be of immense help for MSMEs as it will give the much-needed impetus for new businesses to come to the fore. **"**

JOGINDER RANA,
Vice Chairman and MD, CASHe

Big Boost for MSMEs

With India coming out gradually from the reeling impact of Covid-19 pandemic, the MSME sector welcomed the Union Budget wholeheartedly. In fact, the worst-hit MSME sector stands to benefit most from the Budget announcements.

The Union Budget seems intent on not just prioritizing the revival of MSMEs but also giving the sector a much-needed boost. As a sector that is responsible for around 45 percent of the country's total manufacturing output, 40 percent exports, and almost 30 percent of the national GDP, there's no doubt the MSME sector deserves to be a top priority.

Over the next five years, the government intends to roll out Rs 6,000-crore-worth program to rate MSMEs. As part of this rollout, the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme, or ECLGS, will be extended up to March 2023. Additionally, the guaranteed cover amount will be expanded by Rs 50,000 crore right up to a total cover of Rs 5 lakh crore. Aside from facilitating faster recovery of the sector, these moves

" The Indian tech startup space continues to witness steady growth, accounting for 70 unicorns with most of them in the IT/knowledge-based sectors. The provisions outlined in this year's Budget will provide them a game-changing economic transformation opportunity. **"**

SUMAN REDDY,
Managing Director and Country Head, Pegasystems India

" The capping of surcharge at 15 percent on Long-Term Capital Gains (LTCG) tax for all listed and unlisted corporations responds to a long-standing demand for new-age businesses. **"**

KAVITHA SUBRAMANIAN,
Co-Founder, Upstox

will be instrumental to ensure MSMEs are provided with the time and funding they need to establish their ground.

"The extension of the ECLGS scheme will be of immense help for MSMEs as it will give the much-needed impetus for new businesses to come to the fore," statesJoginder Rana, Vice Chairman and MD, CASHe.

The Union Budget has also taken into consideration the need for an infusion of funds into the sector. Credit guarantee trust for MSMEs are set to see a revamp and will ensure the allocation

of Rs 2 lakh crore more to the growth of the sector. This would also help MSME-dedicated lenders to have confidence to expand credit to MSME sector basis the credit guarantee of trust. On similar lines, revamping of the Credit Guarantee Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) will provide additional credit of Rs 2 lakh crore.

"We are looking at a fantastic boost to the MSME segment, which will help MSME increase its contribution closer on 40 percent of India's GDP. Most importantly, the government is actually spending a lot of money in terms of digital initiatives within the inter-department and encouraging a complete transformation in the financial sector," elaborates Rajarshi Bhattacharyya, Co-Founder, Chairman and MD, ProcessIT Global.

Further, Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP), an initiative to resuscitate the MSME sector and help it recover from the impact of the pandemic has also been announced as part of the Union Budget. In continuation of their attempts to help the MSME sector revive and come up to speed, the government has decided to extend custom duty exemption on the import of steel scrap by a year.

These announcements within the Union Budget are very much in tandem with the government's Atmanirbhar Bharat imperative and will help the sector recover from the blow it has been dealt by the pandemic. The Rs 6,000 crore allocation goes out to show massive support for the sector and will help support future programs for the acceleration of MSME performance.

Multi-Faceted Support for Startups

The government has time and again recognized and acknowledged that the start-ups are drivers for growth and the economy in today's time. The Union Budget has offered a booster to the start-ups in the form of an extension of the tax incentives by another year i.e. through 2023.

"Extending the tax holiday for another year till March 2023 will help businesses endure the economic slowdown inflicted by the Covid-19 outbreak. This will also mean more significant activity in the investment landscape, enabling robust early-stage venture funding possible for start-ups," shares delighted Rana of CASHe.

"The Indian tech startup space continues to witness steady growth, accounting for 70 unicorns with most of them in the IT/knowledge-based sectors. The provisions outlined in this year's Budget will provide them a game-changing economic transformation opportunity," highlights Suman Reddy, Managing Director and Country Head, Pegasystems India.

The focus on start-ups and Fintech in this year's Budget is a fantastic step that will help this segment grow further, says Kavitha Subramanian, Co-Founder, Upstox. She further adds, "The introduction of 5G and the spread of optical fiber to villages would provide a boost to the Fintech industry. It encourages

> " Finance Minister's announcement on the allotment of funds through NABARD to finance start-ups for agriculture and rural enterprises is a great move towards the development of the agriculture sector as well as for supporting nanopreneurs. "

DILIP MODI,
Founder, Spice Money

digital investment platforms like ours to expand their services, resulting in an increase in retail activity in Tier 2-Tier 3 cities and towns. The Central Bank Digital Money (CBDC) will help to enhance the digital economy by making currency management more efficient and less expensive. The capping of surcharge at 15 percent on Long-Term Capital Gains (LTCG) tax for all listed and unlisted corporations responds to a long-standing demand for new-age businesses."

In addition, the finance minister proposed to boost the start-ups for agriculture and rural enterprise which are relevant for farm produce value chain. For such start-ups, a fund with blended capital (raised under the co-investment model) is proposed to be facilitated through the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (which has invested in AIFs that contribute to the capital of the enterprises working for the benefit of agriculture and rural development). Further, it is proposed to promote start-ups to facilitate 'Drone Shakti' through varied applications and for Drone-As-A-Service.

"Finance Minister's announcement on the allotment of funds through NABARD to finance start-ups for agriculture and rural enterprises along with the plans to launch delivery of hi-tech services for farmers including the use of Kisan Drones is a great move towards the development of the agriculture sector as well as for supporting nanopreneurs," says Modi of Spice Money.

Interestingly, it has also been proposed that R&D for the defense sector will also be opened up for industry, start-ups and academia with 25 percent of the defense R&D Budget earmarked for this.

Further, the Government recognizes that the growth of the start-up ecosystem is dependent upon the venture capital and private equity investments, with approximately Rs 5.5 lakh crore being invested last year. In view to scale up the investments, it has been proposed that an expert committee will be set up in order to examine the regulatory challenges being faced by the investor community, and to suggest appropriate steps to overcome such challenges.

"Startups have got a boost in this year's Union Budget. Among the many incentives proposed in the Budget is the reduction of voluntary exit, where the government has allowed the closure of a private limited company in 6 months of non-functioning. This will not only help accelerate and provide relief to startups wanting to shut a business

> **" Among the many incentives proposed in the Budget is the reduction of voluntary exit, where the government has allowed the closure of a private limited company in 6 months of non-functioning. "**
>
> **AMIT SINGAL,**
> General Partner, Fluid Ventures

but encourage them to experiment. Earlier they had to run the company for 18 months, even after closure, to avail of the benefit of the Fast Exit facility. In addition, the surcharge on Long Term Capital Gain (LTCG) has been capped to 15 percent, which is again a good move to bring more HNIs into startup Angel investment," says Amit Singal, General Partner, Fluid Ventures.

Bottomline

Overall, this Budget is forward-thinking and well-balanced. The emphasis on growth, digitization, and technology outlines the government's commitment to cohesive development and long-term growth. Hence, Budget 2022 will play a crucial role in bolstering India's growth story.

INDIA TO BECOME WORLD'S 3RD LARGEST CONSTRUCTION MARKET, 66% PRIORITIZING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: AUTODESK

Alok Sharma, Director – Channels (India & SAARC), Autodesk, in a conversation with itVARnews, shares his thoughts on growth, achievements and new business model of Autodesk, amidst the ongoing pandemic

ALOK SHARMA,
Director – Channels
(India & SAARC),
Autodesk

■ **Please talk about the highlights of your achievements in terms of business growth, customer acquisitions and new innovations in 2021.**

Our customers continue to embrace and prioritize digital transformation to drive growth, efficiency, and sustainability, generating strong demand for Autodesk's platform. This is demonstrated in the financial results of the first three quarters of the current fiscal year.

As part of our overall business strategy, over the past two years Autodesk has acquired cloud-based product lifecycle management and product management solutions provider Upchain; water infrastructure design company Innovyze and AI and generative design platform vendor Spacemaker.

Upchain: The addition of Upchain to the Autodesk portfolio accelerates our mission to deliver the next-generation software platform for design and manufacturing and creates more value for customers by removing collaboration barriers and increasing efficiency and resiliency.

Innovyze: Our acquisition of Innovyze positions Autodesk as a leading global provider of end-to-end digital solutions from design to operations of water infrastructure, accelerates Autodesk's digital twin strategy, and creates a clearer path to a more sustainable and digitized water industry.

Spacemaker: The acquisition of Spacemaker provides Autodesk with a powerful platform to drive modern, user-centric automation and accelerate outcome-based design capabilities for architects, urban designers and planners.

■ **Please talk about few major developments in your business processes/ model which enabled improvement in business in 2021.**

We've built a robust and resilient subscription business which has provided flexibility and have now focused on our Cloud offerings, therefore enabling work-from-home with ease. This has allowed our customers to not be impacted by us working remotely.

Completely unique to Autodesk, we are building a platform to enable data to flow. We will extend our cloud services to connect data experiences across solutions, igniting a new developer ecosystem. As this ecosystem grows, the data in the platform will become more valuable, driving more insights and users, more usage, and workflows which in turn will drive more apps and extensions – what we call a flywheel of growth.

Undeniably, now more than ever, our largest opportunity to create positive impact at scale is by supporting our customers in automating complex processes with the technology they need to unlock insights, make better decisions, and achieve superior outcomes to improve the impact of everything they design, make, own, and operate. Cloud solutions and connected data environments fuel innovation—across technology, processes, supply chains, and industries. And this opportunity is growing exponentially.

■ **With the ongoing pandemic, what are the changes you see in the relations between brands, channels, and customers?**

The pandemic has demonstrated that we need to be flexible, agile, and be able to adapt quickly as things unfold. The most important thing has been to stay connected with our channel eco system and retain those strong relationships we were able to build prior to the pandemic. Leveraging technologies during this period, moving

to cloud offerings enabling a smooth remote working transition, as well as the benefits of a common data environment are all things that have driven new relationships.

Assisting our partners in the move to predominately a digital focus and how to better reach their customers has also been vital, from a marketing and sales perspective. Prior to the pandemic, our partners didn't see the value of digital and social platforms, with less than 10 percent

leveraging these. But now with changing scenario, over 85 percent of our ecosystem has a digital presence. We have seen some focused digital campaigns come from some of our India partners during the pandemic. Two great examples of this include: One partner focusing on solution selling with a customer focus, utilizing their customer's story to build out a campaign, as well as another partner who created an industry competition that created social awareness and created enormous impact in the market.

> **❝** We've built a robust and resilient subscription business which has provided flexibility and have now focused on our Cloud offerings, therefore enabling work-from-home with ease. This has allowed our customers to not be impacted by us working remotely. **❞**

■ **What is your outlook for the technology industry over the next 2-3 years?**

Government initiatives, such as Atmanirbhar Bharat, will harness the power of connected data and artificial intelligence (AI) to help companies automate their engineering and manufacturing processes, driving push-button automation. The rapid adoption of digital technologies has generated a lot of speculation about

machines replacing humans. This is the arrival of augmented intelligence, in which cognitive computing capabilities help humans make better decisions, faster. European sporting goods retailer Decathlon, for example, is now using AI to design and manufacture its performance bicycles more efficiently, making them lighter, more durable, and faster while slashing design-phase emissions.

In construction, India is expected to become the world's 3rd largest construction market, with construction output to grow on average by 7.1 percent each year. There is more government spending with multiple projects such as PMAY, Bharatmala, Bharat-net Project, Jal Jeevan Mission and Affordable Housing Projectin various sectors including airports, urban and rural infrastructure, railways, power and renewable energy, irrigation, water treatment plants and waterways.

With 66 percent of construction companies in India prioritizing digital transformation, the construction sector has seen an increased acceptance of digital construction solutions. Research has found that 20 percent of construction firms in the country have implemented BIM in large residential, commercial and industrial projects.As the Internet of Things (IoT), AI and cloud-computing technologies drive the industry's digital transformation, digital twins are gaining traction. According to McKinsey in 2016, large projects are, on average, up to 80 percent over budget.

COMING OUT OF THE PANDEMIC, 2021 WAS ABOUT REBUILDING, RECOVERY, STRENGTHENING OUR PRODUCT AND VALUE PROPOSITION

Speaking about his views and outlook around technology trends and business challenges, Shayak Mazumder, CEO, Co-Founder, Eunimart elaborates on artificial intelligence, augmented reality, live streaming, omnichannel sales, and chatbots that will be dominating e-commerce in the coming 2-3 years.

SHAYAK MAZUMDER, CEO, Co-Founder, Eunimart

■ Please talk about the highlights of your achievements in terms of business growth, customer acquisitions, and new innovations in 2021.

2021 has been a monumental year for us as we unlocked a few milestones. First, we raised a Pre-series A round funding from LetsVenture, 9Unicorns, Loyal VC, and Supply Chain Labs. We successfully met the commitments of 3M$ funding in the past year.

Second, we set up an office in The United States of America and onboarded Mr. Levi Reed as our Co-Founder along with several industry leaders as our mentors. We further launched in Saudi Arabia and UAE with success in acquiring customers in these countries.

Third, Eunimart was also a part of TechStars Los Angeles, one of the country's leading and thriving tech incubators with programs that focus on innovations that make

the world better. We were also a part of The Alchemist Incubator Program, one of the most renowned accelerators for startups that monetize from enterprises. Lastly, we were also able to turn around the recovery of 15M$.

■ Please talk about a few major developments in your business processes/ model which enabled improvement in business in 2021.

Coming out of the pandemic, 2021 was about rebuilding, recovery, strengthening our product and value proposition. We have had several releases that have enhanced product offerings. We have increased the number of marketplaces (Sales channels), logistics partnerships, and strategic partnerships. We opened up new marketplace partnerships globally – Shoppee in the Philippines and India, Daraaz in Nepal and India, and Amazon Saudi Arabia. We are in the final stages of partnering with shipping and warehousing partnerships in the US, UK, and EU – to provide FBA-like fulfillment services. We have designed, developed, and launched an exciting new warehousing and shipping solution for SMEs and enterprise customers; that makes cross-country warehousing accessible to brands of all sizes. Data science and AI will be our key focus areas in 2022.

We have improved our AI imaging tools. We will be launching and improving on the first of its kind AI for cataloging module that will be able to create automated catalog creation for multiple geographies and channels of sales Improved our revenue GMV and are on track for Series A raise in the last quarter of this year.

> ❝ We have designed, developed, and launched an exciting new warehousing and shipping solution for SMEs and enterprise customers; that makes cross-country warehousing accessible to brands of all sizes. Data science and AI will be our key focus areas in 2022. ❞

■ What are the top trends that will shape the technology industry in 2022?

In an increasingly connected world, technology has the potential to revolutionize and re-invent how we do business. As we look forward and prepare for a post-pandemic future, we're optimistic that the latest tech trends can help address some of our most pressing business challenges and build a more equitable, resilient society. In 2022, Ecommerce will jump from 11% to 52%, which

is testament enough that most companies will use a large chunk of their resources towards digitization. This will further result in an increased rush in the SMEs to turn to digital ways of conducting business activities. This massive technology uptake will further create more likely situations for the SMEs to adopt digital methods or

even completely switch to technology-oriented models.

■ What is your outlook for the technology industry over the next 2-3 years?

Smartphones are not just the future but also the present of the Ecommerce world. As smartphone use and internet penetration increase with each passing day, the role of smartphones in e-commerce traffic is getting crucial, as customers in a large number are using

smartphones for online shopping. The number of smartphone users for online shopping has crossed more than half of the world population. The desktop still is the primary method for customers for their e-commerce shopping. However, it won't last long, as global trends in the e-commerce sector disclose that mobile devices will be the primary technology utilized to find out, conduct research, and buy goods/services. Virtual assistants are another thing of today. Today's average smart gadgets user knows or uses from the many known virtual assistants like Google Voice Search, Amazon Alexa, Cortana, Viv, Google Home, and Siri. Over the next few years, virtual assistants or voice commands will shape up to become a usual norm and form to be a significant factor in the tech innovations for eCommerce. Metaverse, artificial intelligence, augmented reality, live streaming, omnichannel sales, and chatbots are some of the top trends expected to dominate e-commerce in the coming 2-3 years. A larger percentage of businesses walking parallel with technology will also give a huge rise to omnichannel implementation. With more businesses adopting the digital methods, they will also begin to see the impressive results that omnichannel implementation can bring.

MARKET CHANGES HAVE BLURRED LINES BETWEEN BRAND, PARTNER, AND CUSTOMER

Krithiwas Neelakantan, Channel & Alliances Head, Palo Alto Networks, spoke to Amit Singh on the company's recent achievements, cybersecurity trends and how market trends and dynamics are changing the chemistry between brands, partners and the customers

KRITHIWAS NEELAKANTAN,
Channel & Alliances Head, Palo Alto Networks

■ **Please talk about your recent achievements.**

2021 has been a solid year for our business. As enterprises, globally, focused on digital transformation and rapid cloud adoption, our business adapted to deliver prevention-based, end-to-end security via a single integrated platform. In tandem with this, we worked to ensure continuous innovation across network, cloud, and devices. Our total revenue for the fiscal fourth quarter 2021 grew 28 percentYoY to $1.2 billion, compared with total revenue of $950.4 million for the fiscal fourth quarter 2020. Our Strata, Prisma and Cortex platforms saw consistent and sizable customer transactions worldwide.

We also joined the Nasdaq-100 Index, home to the top 100 largest domestic and international non-financial companies with a substantial market capitalization. This inclusion affirmed our position as the preferred cybersecurity partner for organizations globally. These outcomes can be attributed to our product innovation, platform integration, business model transformation and investments in our go-to market organization.

On the partner front, we launched the current iteration of our partner program, NextWave 3.0, with a focus on providing incentives and value for our partners. With NextWave 3.0, we added specialization benefit plans that gave our partners graded benefits based on the resources invested, business growth, and competencies acquired. The program is tuned to market needs and helps partners address a customer's evolving cybersecurity frameworks. Our partners are now well-positioned to leverage our investments in building pipelines, acquiring new customers, and delivering the portfolio.

When it comes to India, the country continues to drive our success story globally. With over 2,500 customers in India and acquiring an average of 100 net new customers every quarter, the country remains a priority market for us, both in terms of innovation and business opportunities and as such we continue to invest in the market. Earlier this year, we unveiled our new multi cloud location that will enable India-based and other regional organizations to benefit from direct, high-performance access to our integrated platform solutions while allowing storage of their logs within Indian borders. The availability of the regionally hosted services is a part

of Palo Alto Networks ongoing commitment to deliver the most complete set of security services locally for India and for our regional customers. These services will enable our customers to balance data privacy with the ability to detect emerging threats, providing a seamless, streamlined security solution operated and delivered within India.

> " On the partner front, we launched the current iteration of our partner program, NextWave 3.0, with a focus on providing incentives and value for our partners. "

■ **Please talk about a few major developments in your business processes/ model which enabled improvement in business in 2021.**

Recognizing that the move to cloud will dominate in the coming years, we focused on growing and innovating rapidly by delivering a comprehensive, native, and fully integrated platform with best-of-breed capabilities, alongside cloud-native offerings to our customers. Following our acquisition of developer-first cloud security company Bridgecrew, in November 2021 we announced Prisma

Cloud 3.0, the industry's first integrated platform to shift security left — improving organizations' entire cloud security posture by reducing security risk at runtime. 3.0 offers cloud code security to embed protections in the development process. In line with the evolving business reality of hybrid workforce, we also introduced PRISMA SASE, an integrated cloud-delivered service with industry-leading network security and next-generation SD-WAN to ensure that organizations stay secure and productive while working fluidly between branch offices and home offices.

■ **What are the top trends that will shape the technology industry in 2022?**

The pandemic has brought about decades of technology advancements and digital transformations within a span of two years. Remote and hybrid workspaces have made our interactions with smart, intuitive devices all pervasive, generating

reams of digital data that now double up in existing physical spaces. This hyper-connectedness will further blur the lines between our online and offline worlds and in turn could create far-reaching consequences on our security in the real-world.

Moreover, IoT technologies will emerge as a critical business enabler. In fact, according to a recent global IoT study we undertook with global IT decision-makers, 84 percent of respondents in India have reported an increase in non-business devices connecting to corporate networks by remote workers. A whopping majority (97 percent) believed that their organization's approach to IoT, therefore, needs a complete overhaul. Smart light bulbs, diabetes monitors, heart rate monitors, kettles, game consoles, and even pet feeders balance the list of strangest devices identified on such networks.

As we move into 2022, we expect this trend to continue. Organizations will therefore look to draw up a strategic approach that will provide complete visibility into the security infrastructure. A Zero Trust architecture combined with Artificial Intelligence (AI) capabilities can enable enterprises to profile, correlate and contextualize and apply threat prevention tools to each connected device, thus eliminating implicit trust and validating

every stage of digital interaction.

As cybersecurity challenges evolve, we will also see a cultural mindset shift that will help build a certain shared responsibility between employees and employers to stay secure. Businesses will work towards educating their workforces on evolving threats and bad actors while enterprises will look at integrated platform capabilities to monitor threats and access to networks. Additionally, enterprises will also have to look at creating levels of segmentation to safeguard employees and the organization's most valuable assets.

We will also see an accelerated pace of automation across enterprises, along with the emergence of tech-first companies that are security-conscious, revitalizing the cybersecurity space in India. We are also seeing great potential in the technology and business opportunities in Secure access service edge (SASE), Cloud, and Machine Learning (ML)/ Artificial Intelligence (AI).

■ With the ongoing pandemic, what are the changes you see in the relations between brands, channels, and customers?

The pandemic has forced enterprises to relook at their operations on a global scale which has pushed brands to innovate and deliver new offerings

across categories. This is applicable to the channel sphere as well where adaptability has become a key business enabler. Partners are broadening their horizons and are servicing customers with varied products instead of one specialized offering. In essence, they have moved up from being value-added resellers to full-fledged business consultants that provide security for the long-term. On the customer front, demands are on an uptick and not exclusive to security. Adopters are looking to secure their

systems and networks, and maintain respectable levels of convenience and automation to deal with a digitally transformed world.

These market changes have blurred the lines between brand, partner, and customer, giving rise to stronger partnerships across the board. The shared responsibility notion of cybersecurity has now gained more popularity and has opened new lines of communication between vendor and end-user, greatly benefiting all parties

involved.

■ The current pandemic has changed the expectations and purchasing behavior of customers, which is forcing many channel firms to reconsider their business model. According to you, what can channels do to reinvent themselves?

In a threat landscape where attack vectors are multiplying daily, it is essential for channel partners to pinpoint areas where they can add real value for customers.

> ❝ We are also seeing great potential in the technology and business opportunities in Secure access service edge (SASE), Cloud, and Machine Learning (ML)/Artificial Intelligence (AI). ❞

In addition, building a diverse and current portfolio of offerings instead of working with a handful of specialized products can provide a competitive edge. But the buck cannot stop at just delivering these products; partners must look at integrating them within their own operations. This can aid in the maturing of their infrastructures, scaling new markets, and delivering optimal customer experiences. It is also important that channel

partners work with vendors to prioritize on a platform approach that delivers end-to-end security across the entire expanse of a digital ecosystem - which will be crucial for efficiently securing hybrid and remote workers around the world.

■ What is your outlook for the technology industry over the next 2-3 years?

Cybersecurity is fast becoming a boardroom issue for organizations across industries, pushing executives to look at it not as a cost but as an investment. Additionally, considering how attack surfaces have expanded in the hybrid work era, this mindset of being proactive about cybersecurity is gradually taking form within the general consumer as well. Therefore, we at Palo Alto Networks believe that in the coming years, it will be crucial for both organizations and individuals to remain cognizant of emerging trends.

Here are the 5 key trends we see emerging from a cybersecurity standpoint over the next few years:

The meteoric rise of bitcoin will create a well-funded adversary: Cryptocurrency will fuel the rise and evolution of the ransomware industry, with larger attacks on important infrastructure,

while calls for its regulation gain traction. Because of its decentralized character, it will be difficult for regulators to track down the perpetrators. As a result, businesses must concentrate on enhancing their cybersecurity posture and determining their level of preparedness for an attack, as well as conducting tabletop exercises to identify any security weaknesses that must be fixed. Collaboration between cybersecurity providers, cloud providers, and telecommunications providers will help disrupt successful attacks and impose real costs on attackers.

As physical and digital lines blur, who or what we trust will impact our security even more: Increased interactions with smart, intuitive devices with sensory triggers will create reams of digital data that will double up in existing physical spaces. Given this hyper-connectedness of networks, organizations need to draw up a strategic approach that will provide complete visibility into the security infrastructure. A Zero Trust architecture combined with Artificial Intelligence (AI) capabilities can enable enterprises to profile, correlate and contextualize and apply threat prevention tools to each connected device, thus eliminating implicit trust and validating every stage of digital interaction.

Attackers will set their eyes on countries' critical digital infrastructure: Cyberattacks on essential infrastructure, with confidential and lucrative data, worldwide, are on the rise. These attacks have revealed that the implementation of cybersecurity protocols is significantly slower than the rate of digitalization across countries. With hackers aiming to dent the critical infrastructure, there is a need to fast-track improved global policies and regulatory collaboration. Governments and businesses must

> " Cryptocurrency will fuel the rise and evolution of the ransomware industry, with larger attacks on important infrastructure, while calls for its regulation gain traction. "

encourage the creation of safeguards against complex threats, particularly those that target critical infrastructure through supply chain gaps. Time-strapped security teams will benefit from technologies like behavioral analytics and SOAR.

A borderless workforce will need borderless solutions: With remote work gaining long-term acceptance and homes evolving into workplaces, cybercriminals

have switched their focus from targeting corporate offices to attacking individuals. To contend with this new reality, enterprises will have to evolve beyond their corporate networks, deploy remote work solutions and bring unified security policy management to remote employees. This will take form in the deployment of new integrated solutions like Secure Access Service Edge (SASE). Combining security, networking, and digital experience management, SASE solutions will be critical in bringing

about both security and operational efficiency. We can also expect a lot more harmonization, or application rationalization, around the all-remote-access technologies that people use, such as VPNs, which can be complex to work out.

The API economy will usher in a new era of digital fraud and exploits: In an emerging web 3.0 scenario, digital experience and banking will be a primary

differentiator for financial institutions. With the rise of open-banking and hyper growth of Fintech, poor programming or security misconfigurations at the application interface levels (API) could provide cybercriminals with greater opportunities to carry out identity theft, fraud, and unauthorized data collection. Public-private participation through awareness and educational programs would be central to every security strategy. Special focus would have to be given to groups like the elderly, who may be more susceptible to fraud as new users of digital banking platforms. Simultaneously, enterprises will need to adopt DevSecOps, which will ensure their infrastructure is tested for security problems before it goes public, allowing their IT teams to plan for any security issues that might appear after deployment. In addition, organizations should implement API security to their inventory and assess the security of external-facing APIs. Monitoring and addressing any anomalous activities within API interactions is also vital.

Mitigating tomorrow's threats will require a greater leadership commitment, collaboration, and effective communication to drive a mindset shift to view cybersecurity as a team sport between governments, enterprises, and individuals.

Ransomware Continues to be Relentless, Destructive: Fortiguard Labs

Fortinet, a broad, integrated, and automated cybersecurity solution provider, has announced the latest semiannual FortiGuard Labs Global Threat Landscape Report. Threat intelligence from the second half of 2021 reveals an increase in the automation and speed of attacks demonstrating more advanced persistent cybercrime strategies that are more destructive and unpredictable. In addition, the expanding attack surface of hybrid workers and hybrid IT is a focal point that cyber adversaries are attempting to exploit.

Michael Joseph, Director System Engineering, India & SAARC, Fortinet, said, "Cybersecurity is a fast-moving and dynamic industry, but recent threat events show unparalleled speeds at which cyber adversaries are developing and executing attacks today. New and evolving attack techniques span the entire kill chain but especially in the weaponization phase,

showing an evolution to a more advanced persistent cybercrime strategy that is more destructive and unpredictable. To protect against this broad scope of threats, organizations need to implement AI-powered prevention, detection, and response strategies based on a cybersecurity mesh architecture allowing for much tighter integration, increased automation, as well as a more rapid, coordinated, and effective response to threats across the extended network."

For a detailed view of the report, as well as some important takeaways, read the blog. Highlights of the 2H 2021 report follow:

Log4j Demonstrates Dramatic Speed of Exploit Organizations Face:
The Log4j vulnerabilities that occurred in late 2021 demonstrate the rapidly increasing speed of exploit that cybercriminals are attempting to leverage to their advantage. Despite emerging in the second week

of December, exploitation activity escalated quickly enough, in less than a month, to make it the most prevalent IPS detection of the entire second half of 2021. In addition, Log4j had nearly 50x the activity volume in comparison to the well-known outbreak, ProxyLogon, that happened earlier in 2021. The reality is that organizations have very little time to react or patch today given the speeds that cyber adversaries are employing to maximize fresh opportunities. Organizations need AI and ML-powered intrusion prevention systems (IPS), aggressive patch management strategies, and the threat intelligence visibility to prioritize those threats propagating most quickly in the wild to reduce overall risk.

Adversaries Rapidly Targeting New Vectors Across the Attack Surface:
Some lesser or low-lying threats have the potential to cause bigger problems in the future and are worthy of watching. An example is newly crafted malware designed to exploit Linux

systems, often in the form of executable and linkable format (ELF) binaries. Linux runs the back-end systems of many networks and container-based solutions for IoT devices and mission-critical applications, and it is becoming a more popular target for attackers. In fact, the rate of new Linux malware signatures in Q4 quadrupled that of Q1 2021 with ELF variant Muhstik, RedXOR malware, and even Log4j being examples of threats targeting Linux. The prevalence of ELF and other Linux malware detections doubled during 2021. This growth in variants and volume suggests that Linux malware is increasingly part of adversaries' arsenal. Linux needs to be secured, monitored and managed as any other endpoint in the network with advanced and automated endpoint protection, detection and response. In addition, security hygiene should be prioritized to provide active threat protection for systems that may be affected by low-lying threats.

Botnet Trends Show a More Sophisticated Evolution of Attack Methods: Threat trends demonstrate that botnets are evolving to adopt newer and more evolved cybercriminal attack techniques. Instead of being primarily monolithic and focused mostly on DDoS attacks, botnets are now multipurpose attack vehicles leveraging a variety of more sophisticated attack techniques, including ransomware. For example, threat actors, including operators of botnets like Mirai, integrated exploits for the Log4j vulnerability into their attack kits. Also, botnet activity was tracked associated with a new variant of the RedXOR malware, which targets Linux systems for data exfiltration. Detections of botnets delivering a variant of RedLine Stealer malware also surged in early October morphing to find new targets using a COVID-themed file. To protect networks and applications, organizations must implement zero trust access solutions to provide least access privileges especially to secure IoT endpoints and devices entering the network as well as automated detection and response capabilities to monitor anomalous behavior.

Malware Trends Show Cybercriminals Maximizing "Remote Everything:" Evaluating the prevalence of malware variants by region reveals a sustained interest by cyber adversaries in maximizing the remote work and learning attack vector. In particular, various forms of browser-based malware were prevalent. This often takes the form of phishing lures or scripts that inject code or redirect users to malicious sites. Specific detections

MICHAEL JOSEPH,
Director System Engineering,
India & SAARC, Fortinet

vary across global regions, but can be largely grouped into leveraging three broad distribution mechanisms: Microsoft Office executables (MSExcel/, MSOffice/), PDF files, and browser scripts (HTML/, JS/). Such techniques continue to be a popular way for cybercriminals to exploit people's desire for the latest news about the pandemic, politics, sports, or other headlines, and to then find entryways back to corporate networks. With hybrid work and learning remaining a reality, there are fewer layers of protection between malware and would-be victims. Organizations must take a "work-from-anywhere" approach to their security by deploying solutions capable of following, enabling, and protecting users no matter where they are located. They need advanced security on the endpoint (EDR) combined with zero trust access solutions, including ZTNA. Secure SD-WAN is also critical to ensure secure WAN connectivity for the extended network.

Ransomware Activity Still High and Continues to Get More Destructive: FortiGuard Labs data reveals that ransomware has not

subsided from peak levels over the last year and instead, the sophistication, aggressiveness, and impact of ransomware is increasing. Threat actors continue to attack organizations with a variety of new as well as previously seen ransomware strains, often leaving a trail of destruction. Old ransomware is being actively updated and enhanced, sometimes with wiper malware included, while other ransomware is evolving to adopt Ransomware-as-as-Service (RaaS) business models. RaaS enables more threat actors to leverage and distribute the malware without having to create the ransomware themselves. FortiGuard Labs observed a consistent level of malicious activity involving multiple ransomware strains, including new versions of Phobos, Yanluowang and BlackMatter. The operators of BlackMatter professed they would not attack target organizations in the healthcare sector and other critical infrastructure sectors but did so anyway. Ransomware attacks remain a reality for all organizations regardless of industry or size. Organizations need to take a proactive approach with real-time visibility, analysis, protection and remediation coupled with zero trust access solutions, segmentation, and regular backing up of data.

Deeper Understanding of Attack Techniques Can Help Stop Criminals Faster: Analyzing the attack goals of adversaries is important to be able to better align defenses against the speed of changing attack techniques. To observe the malicious outcomes of various attacks, FortiGuard Labs analyzed the functionality of detected malware by detonating the malware samples collected throughout

the year. The result was a list of the individual tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) the malware would have accomplished if the attack payloads had been executed. This high-resolution intelligence shows that stopping an adversary earlier is more critical than ever, and that by focusing on a handful of those identified techniques, in some situations an organization could effectively shut down a malware's methods for attack. For example, the top three techniques for the 'execution' phase account for 82 percent of the activity. The top two techniques for obtaining a foothold in the 'persistence' phase represent nearly 95 percent of the observed functionality. Leveraging this analysis can have a dramatic effect in how organizations prioritize their security strategies to maximize their defense.

Protecting Against Fast-moving and Sophisticated Cyber Adversaries
As attacks continue to develop in sophistication and span the entire attack surface at increased speeds, organizations need solutions designed to interoperate rather than function in isolation. Securing against evolving attack techniques will require smarter solutions that know how to ingest real-time threat intelligence, detect threat patterns and fingerprints, correlate massive amounts of data to detect anomalies, and automatically initiate a coordinated response. Point products need to be replaced with a cybersecurity mesh platform that provides centralized management, automation and integrated solutions that work in concert.

Salesforce Establishes Sustainability as Core Company Value; Launches Net Zero Cloud 2.0

Salesforce has announced sustainability as a core company value, joining its values of trust, customer success, innovation, and equality. And, to help organizations accelerate their own journeys to net zero emissions, Salesforce is also making Net Zero Cloud 2.0 — a solution that tracks greenhouse gas emissions — available globally.

Suzanne DiBianca, Chief Impact Officer, EVP of Corporate Relations, Salesforce, said, "I'm extremely proud that we will now officially count sustainability as a core value, making it part of everyone's job at Salesforce. When we add a value we operationalize it in every area of the business. In this climate emergency, we need every organization to get to net zero as fast as possible. Now that Salesforce has reached net zero emissions, we want to use our technology and best practices to help organizations reach their climate goals, too."

Salesforce further integrates sustainability throughout company

At Salesforce, values drive the company's decision-making. Every employee and team knows Salesforce's values and strives to live by them every day.

With sustainability as a core value, Salesforce is leveraging its full power to drive climate action and further operationalize sustainability across its entire business. This means every internal organization incorporates sustainability into its V2MOM — a Salesforce alignment process that drives the company's success.

Salesforce has net zero emissions and has been voluntarily reporting on its greenhouse gas emissions since fiscal year 2012. Since that time, the company has continued to increase the scope of its climate action strategy by actively engaging policymakers, peers, partners, suppliers, and customers to accelerate towards a collective net zero goal. And just last week, Salesforce announced that it is tying executive pay to environmental, social, and governance (ESG) performance, including two sustainability metrics.

Mandatory climate reporting is coming

Regulatory change may soon require organizations to report on ESG matters, and many countries are already disclosing their climate-related financial risks and opportunities.

Legislatures and regulatory agencies in the United States are also considering disclosure rules. A bill that would require companies to disclose all greenhouse gas emissions is moving through the California legislature; and the U.S. SEC has solicited public input on voluntary climate change disclosures.

The next generation of Net Zero Cloud

In this new era of climate accountability, organizations' carbon data will need to be as trusted as their financial data. Organizations will also need to know how to reduce emissions in a credible and meaningful way.

Net Zero Cloud 2.0 has been completely rebuilt to offer trusted reporting, deeper insights, and supplier management so that organizations can go net zero now. With Net Zero Cloud 2.0, organizations can get sustainability insights with powerful Tableau CRM dashboards to achieve their climate goals and take action with:

- Carbon Footprint Forecast: Organizations can find the fastest path to net zero with 'what-if' analysis to visualize progress and alignment to their climate action commitments.
- Science-Based Targets: Setting goals in line with science-based targets and measuring progress.
- Supplier Management: Track scope 3 emissions across the entire value

chain and help suppliers and distributors reduce emissions.

- Waste Data Management: Organizations can upload and track hazardous and non-hazardous waste management data and treatment methods like landfilled, composted, or combusted — all in one place.

SUZANNE DIBIANCA,
Chief Impact Officer,
EVP of Corporate Relations,
Salesforce

Customers and partners are implementing Net Zero Cloud

Global companies across industries are already using Net Zero Cloud to reach their climate goals:

- Mastercard (Global): Mastercard, a global technology company in the payments industry, is using Net Zero Cloud, with support from Accenture, to gain comprehensive insights around the emissions of its suppliers, enabling it to work more effectively with its partner network to take climate action.
- ISDI (France): ISDI, the world's first digital business school, is using Net Zero Cloud to calculate the carbon footprint of each visitor to its Paris center based on the types of

transportation used, length of hotel stay, and energy use onsite – made possible by strategic support from Accenture.

- Deloitte Germany (Germany): As one of the top companies for corporate travel, Deloitte Germany's clients have been challenging them on the transparency of their carbon footprint and in some cases it is a deciding factor for winning business. With Net Zero Cloud, Deloitte Germany can track its carbon emissions on a project by project basis allowing clients and employees to have insight into the carbon cost of business.
- Uhuru (Japan): As a top digital transformation consulting services company, Uhuru is using Net Zero Cloud to track scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions to educate its employees about decarbonization and eventually enable them to use this knowledge to help clients with their sustainability mission.
- MillerKnoll (USA): MillerKnoll, a global leader in designs and furnishings, is using Net Zero Cloud with support from Salesforce consulting partner Orion Global Solutions to see its supplier environmental impact in one singular view. Its annual emissions report used to take hundreds of hours across 20 spreadsheets. Now, MillerKnoll knows where they stand relative to their goal at any time.

Salesforce's consulting partners including Accenture, KPMG, Orion Global Solutions, PwC, Slalom, and Traction on Demand are actively implementing Net Zero Cloud for customers across industries. In addition, these partners provide advisory services to drive the digital transformation required for customers to accelerate their journeys to becoming net zero companies.

Google Chat to Replace Hangouts from March

Google has announced that it is now ready to move into the final phase of the migration from Classic Hangouts to Google Chat for Google Workspace customers.

The company said it will turn on the 'Chat preferred; setting for any customers who have not already done so, making Google Chat the default chat application beginning March 22.

The company in a blogpost said, "This means that when users visit classic Hangouts in Gmail on the web or the classic Hangouts mobile apps, they will be directed to Chat."

"Hangouts.google. com will continue to work. It is not possible to opt out of this change. If you would like to export your classic Hangouts and Chat data, learn about exporting your organization's data," it added.

After domains are upgraded to 'Chat preferred', all classic Hangouts applications, except hangouts.google. com, will be disabled. Additionally, the 'Chat and classic Hangouts' and 'Classic Hangouts only' settings will be removed from the Admin console.

Messages sent in classic Hangouts will continue to be retained and held according to policies set for Chat, and searchable and exportable with Gmail search in Vault. Messages sent in Chat are subject to retention rules and hold you set for Chat and searchable and exportable with Chat search in Vault.

The company also mentioned that except for a few special cases, all the conversation history from Hangouts will be available in Google Chat. However, starting mid-March 2022, any newly created spaces in Google Chat within domain will not appear in classic Hangouts.

Global AI Spending Expected to Reach $434 Billion in 2022

The global revenues for the artificial intelligence (AI) market, including software, hardware, and services, are forecast to grow 19.6 percent (on-year) in 2022 to $432.8 billion, according to a new report.

The market is expected to break the $500 billion mark in 2023, reports International Data Corporation (IDC).

AI solutions are currently focused on business process problems and range from human augmentation to process improvement to planning and forecasting, empowering superior decisions and outcomes.

Ritu Jyoti, Group VP, Worldwide Artificial Intelligence (AI), Automation Research, IDC, said, "Advancements in language, voice and vision technologies, and multi-modal AI solutions are revolutionizing human efficiencies."

AI software will see its share of spending decline slightly in 2022 as spending for AI hardware and services grows more quickly. This trend will continue into 2023.

Overall, AI services is forecast to deliver one of the fastest spending growth over the next five years with a compound annual growth rate

(CAGR) of 22 percent while the CAGR for AI Hardware will be 20.5 percent.

Jyoti said, "Overall, AI plus human ingenuity is the differentiator for enterprises to scale and thrive in the era of compressed digital transformation."

In the AI software category, AI applications accounted for 47 percent of spending in the first half of 2021, followed by AI System Infrastructure Software with around 35 percent share.

Jennifer Hamel, Research Manager, Analytics and Intelligent Automation Services, said, "AI remains a key driver of IT investment, which in turn boosts spending on related services to ensure sustainable adoption at scale."

The AI hardware category grew the most in terms of market share in the first half of 2021 with a jump of 0.5 percent share.

It is forecast to reach 5 per cent market share in 2022 with year-over-year growth of 24.9 per cent.

Peter Rutten, Research Vice President, Performance Intensive Computing at IDC, said, "Of all the spending in the various AI market segments, AI Hardware is by far the smallest."

Kaspersky Promotes Sandra Lee as Managing Director, APAC

Kaspersky has announced the appointment of Sandra Lee as Managing Director for the Asia Pacific (APAC) region. Sandra and her team will drive the company's strategy and overall growth in the region.

Sandra Lee said, "APAC has always been a focus market for the company and I am excited to take up this leadership role as we continue to see great business opportunities here. With our strong regional team and solid partner ecosystem, I am looking forward to helping our customers and partners benefit even more from our award-winning solutions and threat intelligence expertise across the region."

Sandra will be based in Kaspersky's APAC headquarters in Singapore.

SANDRA LEE,
Managing Director, Asia
Pacific (APAC), Kaspersky

She will report to Chris Connell, Vice President for Global Sales Network, who was previously also in the role of Managing Director for APAC.

Chris Connell, Vice President for Global Sales Network, Kaspersky, said, "I am thrilled and excited to see Sandra in this APAC leadership role! Her business acumen, commitment to customer success, and team leadership give us great confidence that she will strategically grow our brand in the region. She is also highly regarded by our customers and partner community. I have worked with her closely and I am certain that she is ready to lead the APAC region to even greater heights."

Prior to this promotion, Sandra led the company's global vision for its channel partners by driving higher levels of success for and with the region's partner community for the past three years. Her strong background in sales management, customer and partner success, and team leadership, coupled with her extensive industry experience, puts her in the perfect spot to drive Kaspersky's overall strategy in the region to achieve great success. Sandra has been in the IT industry for more than 20 years in sales and channel leadership roles in Southeast Asia and APAC with various market-leading technology companies

India IT Industry to Adopt As-a-Service Delivery & Operating Models

International Data Corporation (IDC) predicts that by 2024, enterprises in India will shift 50 percent of all tech and services spending to as-a-service and outcomes-centric models. This is among the top 10 predictions for the India IT market unveiled in the latest report IDC FutureScape: Worldwide IT Industry 2022 Predictions — India Implications.

Organizations are continuing to navigate the disruptions, accelerations, and cross currents spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic and the changing economic conditions. By 2022, more than half the global economy is based on or influenced by digital. IDC's Future Enterprise Resiliency and Spending (FERS) survey, wave 7 revealed that the pandemic resulted in 60 percent of organizations in India have accelerated their DX investments.

The IT and communications industries will be among the most transformed as they adopt as-a-service delivery

SHARATH SRINIVASAMURTHY,
Research Director,
Enterprise Solutions &
ICT Practices, IDC India

and operating models, deal with radical alterations in ecosystems/value chains, and recognize that their primary tasks are to help CIOs and their enterprises share, use, govern, and increase the value of data.

Sharath Srinivasamurthy, Research Director, Enterprise Solutions & ICT Practices, IDC India, said, "A digital-first strategy nowadays entails more than just identifying and implementing any new technology or business models. Rather, it is an organizational shift and a culture change that brings customer centricity, hybrid work, unified security, remote operations, and a shared business value. Enterprises would rely more on as-a-service technology options when it comes to enabling an intelligent, empowered, and well-connected workforce

with focused investments in IT infrastructures."

Below are few of the India IT industrywide technology predictions that would impact the technology buyers and suppliers in 2022 and beyond:

Digital-First Drivers: By 2024, digital-first enterprises will enable empathetic customer experiences and resilient operating models by shifting 50 percent of all tech and services spending to as-a-service and outcomes-centric models.

New Cloud Fundamentals: By 2024, 40 percent of I1000 will reset cloud selection processes to focus on business outcomes rather than IT requirements, valuing access to providers' portfolios from device to edge and from data to the ecosystem.

Digital Sustainability: By 2026, 50 percent of I2000 will have digital sustainability teams, tasked with assessing, certifying, and coordinating use of business and IT sustainability data and analytic platforms offered by ICT providers.

These predictions are discussed in greater detail in the new IDC FutureScape report, IDC FutureScape: Worldwide IT Industry 2022 Predictions — India Implications. Each year, IDC releases its Top Predictions through its IDC FutureScape reports to give a crystal ball view of what is ahead for the rapidly changing ICT industry. These predictions have been used to shape the strategies and business objectives of technology leaders and business executives in the next 1-5 years.

Channel Point

Artificial Intelligence the big Opportunity for ISVs & Channel Partners

The days of channel partners being a step behind technology giants are gone. Now the latest technologies that vendors offer and curated into cutting edge solutions by ISVs & channel partners, adding a huge amount of value to the solutions, leverage to the vendors and of course- years to the life of user companies.

Artificial intelligence is one space that is fast developing in its applicability to all sectors, globally. In fact, this is one such technology which is along with a shift in the partner ecosystem is accelerating digital transformation, return to smartern working, and building strategic ecosystems that can drive better business outcomes.

However, India still has a long way to go to be able to utilize AI solutions to add value to business solutions, and we are still experimenting. But to take things forward, its time ISVs also work on their AI abilities, deep understanding and agile processes to offer the advantage AI offers to industry. One of the most significant areas where AI is used widely to develop solutions is in the start-up and small scale sector. Perhaps that's where synergies need to be built, because experts say, that's where most of the AI adoption in India will ultimately take place.

However, factors such as lack of clarity of rules and regulations and the issues of integrity and ethics with AI and ML solutions is hampering the market growth of AI in India. Policy documents and working drafts on Artificial Intelligence issued by the Niti Aayog recognize ethical and fundamental concerns with the implementation of AI and hints towards a self-regulatory approach towards the same in coming times.Also, since data plays a huge role in AI and machine learning apps, there are issues of policies and compliances to be resolved a well!

Perhaps it's also time for ISVs & channels to create their own IPs in the AI space! This could be their opportunity to make inroads into the AI adoption that is expected to reach $500B by 2024, globally. Some of the critical areas where channel partners could add value is chatbots, virtual assistants while the government can utilize AI in citizen services, security, and smart cities.This could provide a significant push to the AI market, especially for the ISV and channel.

In the overall India Artificial Intelligence market share, southern region has captured major pie since 2019 and are expected to lead throughout the forecast period. Further, increasing government spending in research and development of AI based technological advancements would fuel market growth over the coming years.

In 2020, Indian AI startups raised $836.3 million, the largest funding outlay during the last seven years. During the same year, Indian government increased the outlay for Digital India to USD $477 million to boost AI, IoT, big data, cybersecurity, machine learning and robotics.

Either case, it's time for India to develop the ecosystem needed in channels for leveraging AI for better business and to grow to meet world standards of technology adoption.

KALPANA SINGHAL, Editor
(E-mail: kalpana@techplusmedia.co.in)

#1 Backup for Service Providers

Exceed Customers Service level agreements (SLAs) while increasing margins & revenue

veeam | **CSP**PARTNER PROGRAM

Transforming telecommunications enriching the customer experience

atos.net

Trusted partner for your **Digital Journey**

Atos