Evalueserve IP and R&D

February 2026

IPR&D SPARK NEWSLETTER

We can't wait to spark your imagination and fuel your journey as an IP expert!

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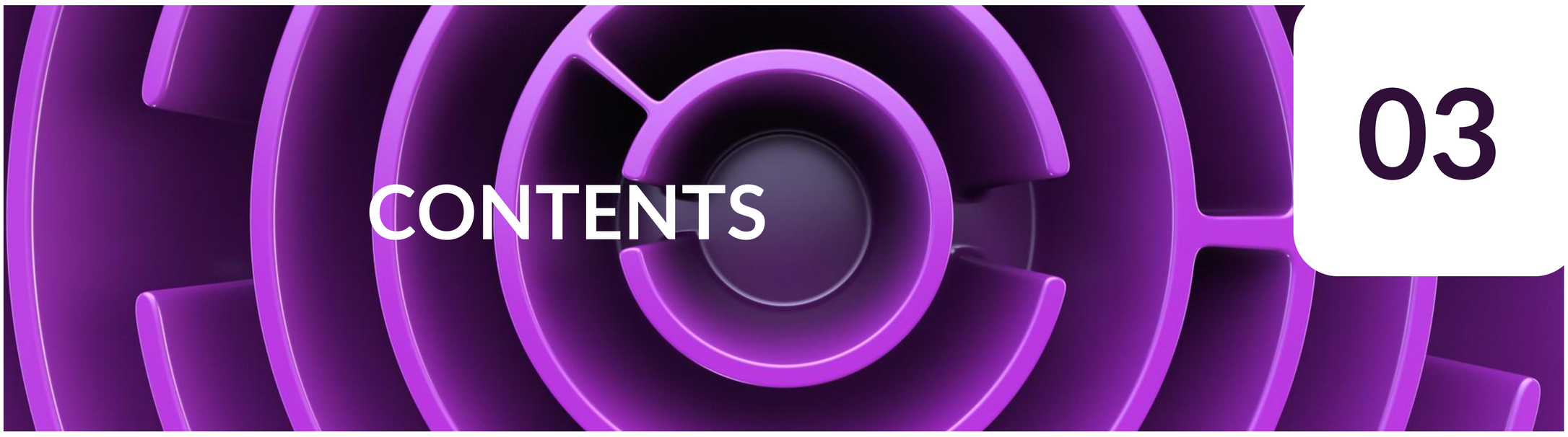
WELCOME TO THE FEBRUARY EDITION OF IPR&D SPARK!

IPR&D Spark Newsletter aims to spark your creativity, ignite your curiosity, and keep you informed on industry trends, legal updates, and insightful analyses. Dive in and explore the fascinating world of IP and R&D with us! This newsletter isn't just about staying informed; it's about fostering a community of passionate minds.

Share your ideas at: Iprdsparknewsletter@evalueserve.com and let's navigate the ever-evolving landscape of IP and R&D together.



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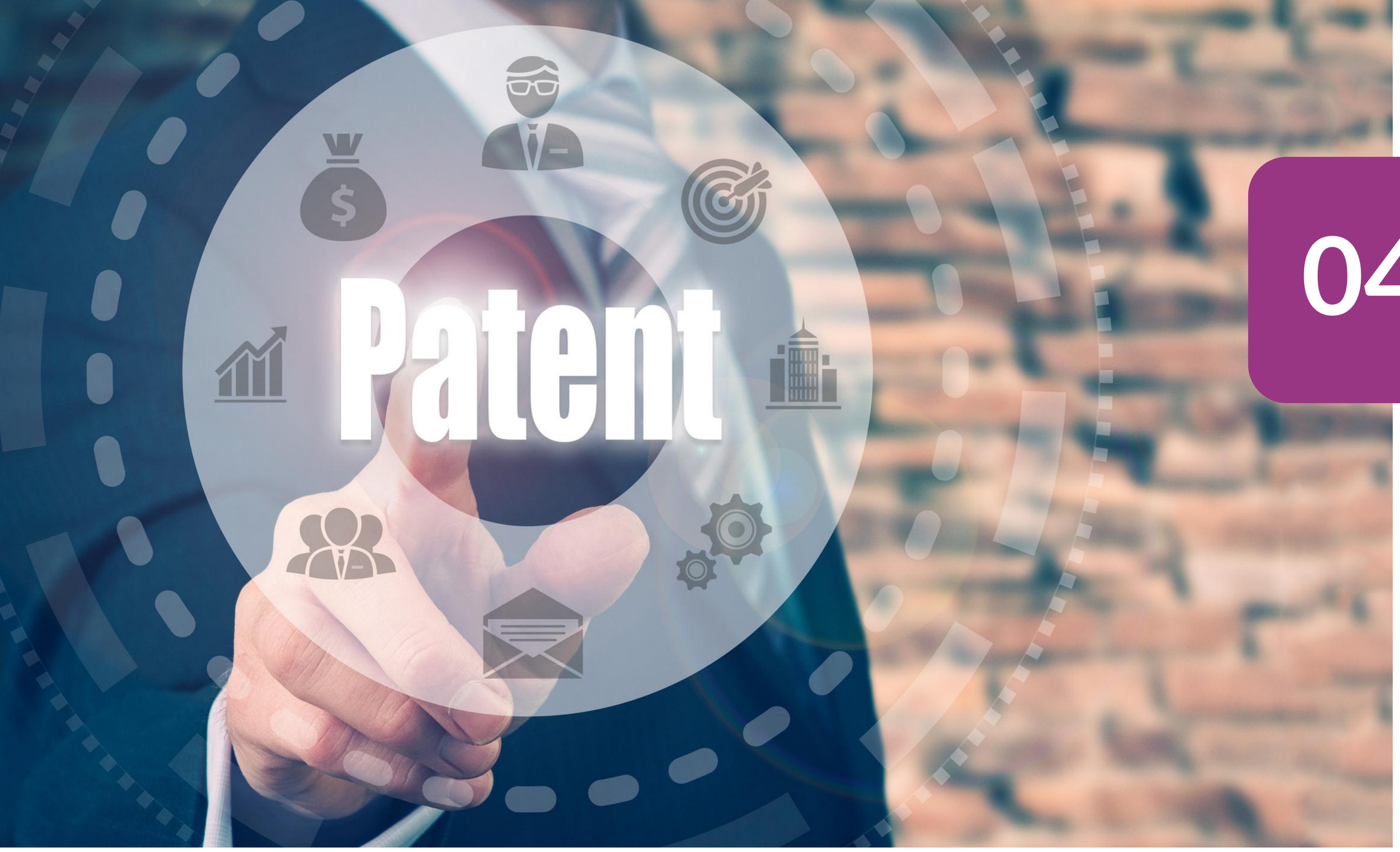

INDUSTRY NEWS

India Launches ICMR “Patent Mitra” to Fund Biomedical Patenting and Tech Transfer Support

Contributor: Christy Titus George

Jan’ 26: On January 31, 2026, India highlighted the Medical Innovations – Patent Mitra initiative, a fully ICMR-funded programme aimed at helping biomedical innovators secure patent protection and progress innovations toward commercialization. Delivered through a dedicated digital portal, the initiative offers end-to-end support for patent facilitation and technology transfer to industry.

Patent Mitra is positioned as a NITI Aayog flagship programme, launched by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) on 8 March 2025, with support from the Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP) and DPIIT, and inaugurated by Union Minister Shri J. P. Nadda. The scheme is open to ICMR intramural institutes, ICMR-supported extramural researchers, DPIIT-registered start-ups, medical colleges/institutes, and institute-led biomedical innovators, with ICMR noting it will not claim IP stakes for certain applicant categories. Registrations are available via the Patent Mitra portal (Source).

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INDUSTRY NEWS

EPO–IP Australia PCT Pilot Gives Australian Applicants a Faster Route into Europe

Contributor: Jitendra Shreemukh

Jan' 26: On January 19, 2026, the European Patent Office (EPO) and IP Australia announced a two-year PCT pilot starting March 1, 2026, allowing Australian applicants to choose the EPO as their International Searching Authority (ISA) and International Preliminary Examining Authority (IPEA). The pilot covers international applications filed via IP Australia or WIPO. Selecting the EPO can help applicants avoid the supplementary European search at regional phase entry, saving time and cost. Applicants using PCT Chapter II with the EPO will also receive a 75% reduction in European regional phase examination fees, strengthening European filing strategy options (Source).

WIPO Shanghai ADR Hub Crosses 200+ Foreign-Related IP Disputes, Court Referrals Surge in 2025

Contributor: Dinesh Sharma

Jan' 26: On January 27, 2026, WIPO announced that its Arbitration and Mediation Shanghai Service has received over 200 cases since beginning operations in October 2020. As of December 31, 2025, the service had administered 220 foreign-related IP disputes through arbitration, court-referred mediation, and party-submitted mediation, with a settlement rate of around 60% where mediators were appointed. Trademark disputes accounted for the largest share (58%), followed by copyright and digital content (22%) and patents (14%), spanning industries such as luxury/fashion, entertainment, IT, machinery, and life sciences. Parties came from 19 jurisdictions, and SMEs represented nearly half of participants. In 2025, Chinese courts referred 68 foreign-related IP mediation cases to the service—42% higher than 2024—highlighting the growing role of ADR in resolving cross-border IP disputes in China (Source).

Korea and China Expand IP Cooperation to Fight Counterfeits and Tackle Bad-Faith Filings

Contributor: Anuj Raj

Jan' 26: On January 22, 2026, South Korea's Ministry of Intellectual Property (MOIP) announced that it signed a renewed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the China National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA) to deepen bilateral collaboration on IP protection. Signed on January 5, 2026 alongside the Korea–China Presidential Summit in Beijing, the updated agreement builds on a prior 2021 framework and broadens cooperation into new areas of shared priority. Under the expanded MOU, MOIP and CNIPA will strengthen efforts to curb counterfeit goods, increase the use of AI and big data in examination and patent analytics, and promote IP commercialization, transactions, and finance. The two offices also agreed to coordinate responses to bad-faith trademark filings, where third parties attempt to register marks already used by others for unfair gain. MOIP noted that the strengthened partnership aims to improve predictability and fairness for businesses operating across both markets, supporting Korean brands as they expand overseas (Source).

R&D and Innovation

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TECHNO-SPOTLIGHT

A Way To Make CO2 a Valuable Fuel Source

Contributor: Rachna Gupta

Jan' 26: Researchers have developed a new way to stabilize inexpensive metal catalysts so they can efficiently transform carbon dioxide into an energy-relevant chemical. A redesigned low-cost catalyst shows unexpected durability while converting CO_2 into a useful energy carrier.

Researchers from Yale and the University of Missouri report that catalysts made with manganese can efficiently convert carbon dioxide into formate. Manganese is a common and low-cost metal, and formate is widely studied as a possible way to store and release hydrogen for future fuel-cell technologies (Source).

Algae's Secret Sun Shield Could Revolutionize Solar Energy

Contributor: Rachna Gupta

Jan' 26: Scientists have uncovered how marine algae protect themselves from too much sunlight while still capturing the energy they need to survive. The findings could help guide the design of more resilient solar technologies modeled after nature. Too much sunlight can spoil a beach day, and it can also damage photosynthesis, the process plants and algae use to turn light into energy. Excessive exposure can overwhelm this system, harming organisms that depend on sunlight to survive. Under the ocean surface, however, some algae have developed an effective defense. Researchers from Osaka Metropolitan University and their collaborators found that a pigment called siphonein helps marine green algae continue photosynthesis smoothly, even under intense light (Source).

Scientists Are Surprised by How Closely the Brain Resembles AI

Contributor: Rachna Gupta

Jan' 26: A new study suggests that the human brain understands spoken language through an ordered series of steps that closely resemble how advanced AI language models work. By recording brain activity while people listened to a spoken story, researchers found that later brain signals matched deeper layers of AI systems, especially in major language regions like Broca's area. The results question long-standing rule-based explanations of language and are supported by a newly released public dataset that offers an important new tool for studying how the brain creates meaning (Source)

New Device Turns Carbon Emissions Into a Valuable Chemical

Contributor: Rachna Gupta

Jan' 26: Scientists have created a single device that captures carbon dioxide and transforms it into a useful chemical at the same time. The new electrode works in real-world conditions, pulling CO2 from mixed gases like those released by power plants and homes (Source).

Key M&A/Strategic Alliances

Contributor: Rachna Gupta

Jan' 26:

- BASF Acquires AgBiTech for Biological Insect Control (Source).
- Air Liquide Completes DIG Airgas Acquisition (Source).
- TotalEnergies and Bapco Energies Launch BxT Trading, a joint venture in Middle East (Source).
- NEXTCHEM and Siemens Energy Enhance Collaboration on Innovative Low-Carbon Solutions (Source).

Breakthrough Strategy Overcomes Resistance in Pancreatic Cancer

Contributor: Aparajita Basu

Jan' 26: A team led by Mariano Barbacid at Spain's National Cancer Research Centre (CNIO) has completely eliminated pancreatic tumors in mice using a triple-drug therapy that prevents treatment resistance. The approach targets three points in the KRAS pathway—mutated in 90% of pancreatic cancers—producing durable, side-effect-free tumor eradication. Current therapies often fail within months because tumors quickly adapt, but this strategy blocks multiple escape routes simultaneously. Although the findings mark a major breakthrough for pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma, researchers caution that the therapy is not yet ready for human trials (Source).

Time-resolved cortisol monitoring with skin-interfaced wearable sensors

Contributor: Shubham Suresh Gurav

Jan' 26: Researchers have developed a skin-interfaced wearable sensor that continuously and non-invasively tracks cortisol through sweat. Published in Nature Sensors,, the device repurposes traditional lateral flow assays into a system capable of capturing sequential, time-stamped hormone readings. Using paper-based microfluidics paired with low-power electronic timers or passive paper-gated mechanisms, it autonomously samples sweat over several hours. Human studies showed it reliably reflected daily cortisol cycles and acute stress responses, closely matching blood and saliva results. The work establishes sweat as a viable medium for real-time hormone monitoring and supports the development of low-cost, scalable wearables for personalized stress, sleep, circadian, and precision-medicine applications (Source).

PropMolFlow Accelerates AI-Driven Molecular Design

Contributor: Aparajita Basu

Jan' 26: PropMolFlow, a new property-guided molecular flow model developed at the University of Florida and New York University, dramatically speeds up AI-enabled molecular generation. The system designs chemically valid molecules ten times faster than earlier diffusion models by reducing sampling steps from around 1,000 to just 100. Benchmarked on the QM9 dataset, PropMolFlow achieved over 90% structural validity while cutting computational costs and boosting virtual screening throughput. This advance positions the model as a powerful tool for rapid drug and materials discovery (Source)

Stem-Cell Therapies Move From Theory to Functional Cures

Contributor: Ashmita Bera

Jan' 26: Stem-cell therapies are rapidly advancing, delivering promising early results across major chronic conditions. In epilepsy, lab-grown neurons have helped patients experience far fewer seizures, dramatically improving daily life. Meanwhile, stem-cell–derived beta cells are enabling some people with type 1 diabetes to stop using insulin entirely, as transplanted cells now regulate their blood sugar naturally. These breakthroughs, once considered distant goals, signal that regenerative medicine is edging closer to functional cures—offering hope for long-term disease control and renewed independence for patients (Source)

SMART Launches WITEC to Revolutionize Elderly Care with Wearable Ultrasound Imaging

Contributor: Atul Kumar Pal

Jan’ 26: SMART has introduced the Wearable Imaging for Transforming Elderly Care (WITEC) research group, aiming to develop the first wearable ultrasound imaging system for real-time monitoring of chronic conditions. This innovation could shift healthcare from reactive, hospital-based care to preventative, community and home-based care, allowing continuous monitoring of conditions like hypertension and heart failure. The system, enhanced by the latest Verasonics ultrasonic imaging technology, supports advanced imaging methods and AI integration, promising higher resolution and long-duration cardiovascular imaging. This advancement could lead to earlier detection, timely intervention, and truly personalized care for the elderly (Source).

Physicists Unveil Terahertz Microscope to Observe Superconducting Electron Motion

Contributor: Atul Kumar Pal

Jan’ 26: MIT physicists have developed a terahertz microscope that uses terahertz light to reveal quantum vibrations in superconducting materials, which were previously unobservable. Terahertz light, oscillating over a trillion times per second, is ideal for probing atomic and electron vibrations but has a wavelength too long to interact effectively with microscopic samples. This new microscope overcomes this limitation, enabling detailed observation of superconductors like BSCCO. The insights gained could advance the development of room-temperature superconductors and identify materials for future terahertz-based wireless communications, promising faster data transmission than current microwave-based systems (Source).

New Efficient Cooling Method Paves Way for Scalable Chip-Based Trapped-Ion Quantum Computers

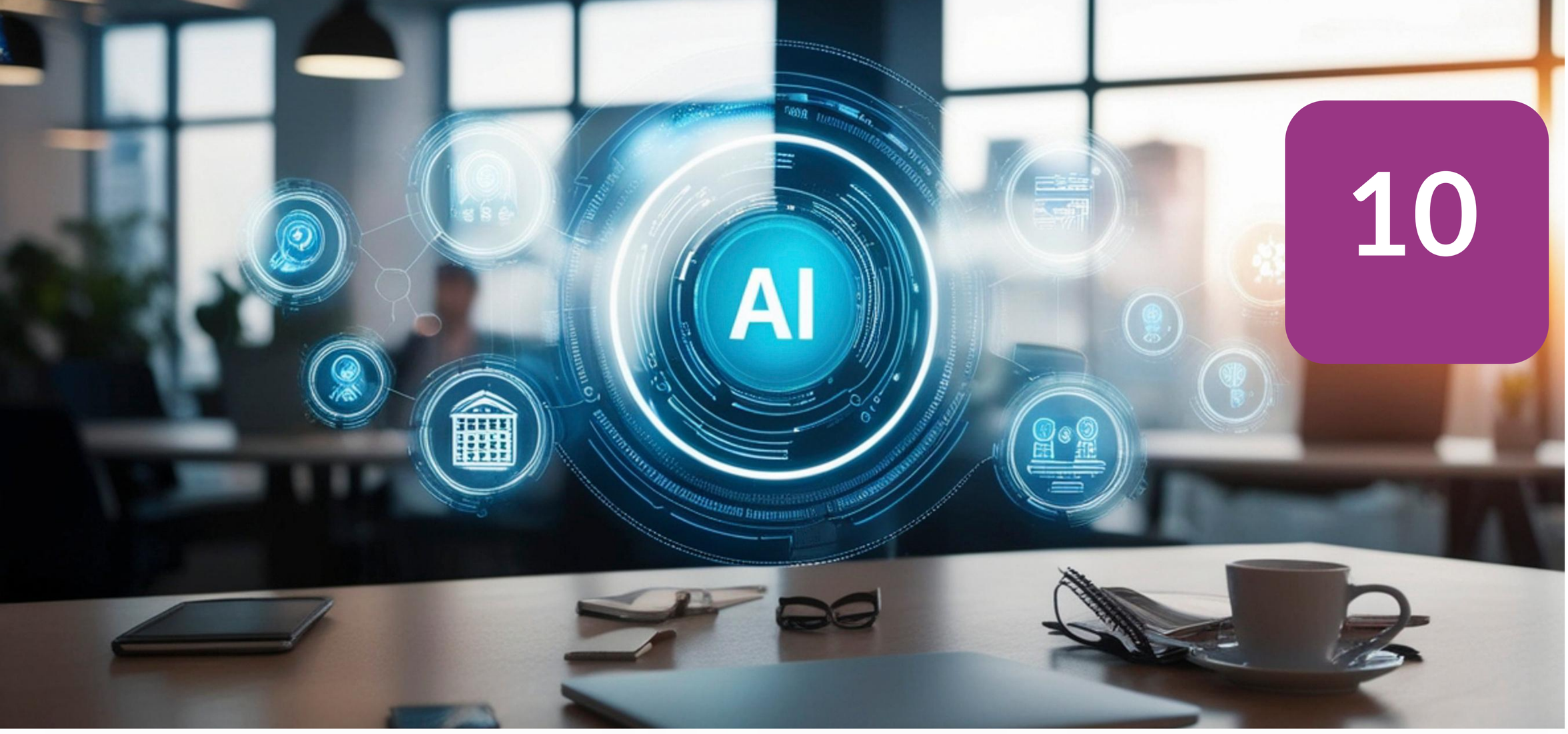
Contributor: Mukesh Kumar

Jan' 26: MIT researchers have developed a new, efficient cooling technique for trapped-ion quantum computers using ultra-compact photonic chips. This advancement addresses the challenge of scaling quantum computers, which need to be large and stable to perform complex operations efficiently. Traditional trapped-ion systems rely on bulky optical equipment and inefficient cooling methods. The new approach, implemented by MIT and MIT Lincoln Laboratory, uses photonic chips with precisely designed antennas to manipulate tightly focused light beams, achieving cooling to temperatures about 10 times below the standard laser cooling limit. This breakthrough is a significant step toward scalable, stable, and efficient chip-based quantum computing systems (Source).

MIT Engineers Innovate Heat-Based Computing for Energy-Efficient Thermal Sensing and Signal Processing

Contributor: Mukesh Kumar

Jan’ 26: MIT researchers have developed microscopic silicon structures that perform calculations using excess heat instead of electricity, potentially enabling more energy-efficient computation. This novel method encodes input data as temperatures, utilizing waste heat in a device. The heat flow through a specially designed material forms the basis of the calculation, with the output represented by the power collected at a fixed temperature. The researchers demonstrated this technique by performing matrix vector multiplication with over 99% accuracy, a fundamental operation in machine learning models. While scaling up for modern deep-learning models remains a challenge, this approach could enhance thermal sensing and signal processing in electronics without additional energy consumption or multiple temperature sensors (Source).



PepsiCo Announces Industry-First AI and Digital Twin Collaboration with Siemens and NVIDIA

Contributor: Simmi Kapoor

Jan' 26: PepsiCo announced a multi-year, industry-first collaboration with Siemens and NVIDIA to transform plant and supply chain operations through advanced digital twin technology and AI. This collaboration marks a first-of-its-kind initiative for a global CPG company applying digital twins to reshape how plant and warehousing facilities are digitally simulated and tested, with early pilots already underway in the US.

Leveraging Siemens' Digital Twin Composer built on NVIDIA's Omniverse platform, PepsiCo plans to retool and enhance its existing plant and warehouse footprint, addressing rising production and distribution demands with a digital-first planning strategy (Source).

Clorox Announces Acquisition of GOJO Industries, Makers of Purell®, Market Leader in Skin Health and Hygiene

Contributor: Simmi Kapoor

Jan' 26: The Clorox Company entered into a definitive agreement to acquire GOJO Industries, a leader of skin health and hygiene solutions, for $2.25 billion in cash, including anticipated tax benefits valued at approximately $330 million for a net purchase price of $1.92 billion. Adding Purell to Clorox's portfolio of trusted brands expands Clorox's position in health and hygiene for consumers and institutional end users alike.

The acquisition, adds a trusted hand hygiene portfolio to Clorox's existing lineup, expanding its health and hygiene footprint across both consumer and institutional channels. GOJO has strong recurring revenue and a broad business-to-business network underpinned by roughly 20 million dispensers worldwide (Source).

Amway Korea Launches AI-Powered myWellness LAB for Personalized Healthy Aging

Contributor: Akshyansh Kumar

Jan' 26: Amway Korea has launched myWellness LAB, an AI-driven personalized nutrition platform designed to optimize long-term health and aging. It evaluates three indicators—cellular aging, metabolic efficiency, and muscle balance—using health check-up data, body composition analyses, and lifestyle questionnaires to create a composite aging score. The system applies a "human physiological network" model, showing how metrics like glucose, antioxidant capacity, liver function, body fat regulation, and fitness interconnect. Based on these insights, it provides tailored nutrient suggestions (e.g., vitamin C, selenium, acerola) plus personalized meal, exercise, and sleep guidance. South Korea's robust health-check infrastructure makes it an ideal market for such advanced wellness solutions (Source).

Bioiberica and Lactalis Launch Spain's First Type II Collagen-Infused Milk for Joint Health

Contributor: Akshyansh Kumar

Jan' 26: Bioiberica and Lactalis Spain have launched Puleva Vita Calcio Colágeno, the country's first milk drink enriched with native type II collagen (Collavant n2) to support joint health. Collavant n2 is clinically backed, GRAS-certified, and NutraStrong-verified, reinforcing its safety and effectiveness. The partnership brings collagen into mainstream functional dairy, meeting rising consumer demand for convenient, science-based joint support. Positioned under Spain's leading calcium-enriched dairy brand, the product is now available in supermarkets and specialty stores (Source).

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New Drug Approvals - FDA & EMA 2025: Fewer Novel Drugs, Strong Rare-Disease and Biosimilar Momentum

Contributor: Basharat Ahmad Sofi

Jan' 26: In 2025, FDA CDER approved 46 novel drugs, with 25 carrying orphan designation—highlighting sustained focus on rare diseases. EMA recommended 104 medicines overall, including 38 new active substances, with oncology a leading area and a record 41 biosimilars. Together, the updates signal resilient drug innovation despite a lower count of novel approvals compared to prior years (Source1; Source 2).

FDA Signals CMC Flexibility for Cell & Gene Therapies—Speeding Development Without Lowering Standards

Contributor: Basharat Ahmad Sofi

Jan' 26: The U.S. FDA announced a more flexible, clearly communicated approach to chemistry, manufacturing and controls (CMC) for cell and gene therapies, aiming to reduce development friction and support faster progress toward BLA submissions. Drawing on CBER's experience approving ~50 CGTs, the agency says tailored flexibility can accommodate complex, patient-specific manufacturing while maintaining rigorous controls for safety, purity, and potency (Source).

Japan Moves to Ban 117 PFHxS Chemicals Under- Chemical Substances Control Law (CSCL) by 2026

Contributor: Mayank Kakkar

Jan' 26: Japan plans to regulate 117 PFHxS-related substances by designating them as Class I Specified Chemical Substances under the Chemical Substances Control Law (CSCL). The draft ordinance, issued on January 21, 2026, follows the Stockholm Convention decision to eliminate PFHxS due to its persistence, bioaccumulation, and toxicity. Public comments are open until February 19, 2026, with the ban on manufacture, import, use, and certain product imports expected to take effect on June 17, 2026 (Source).

Preclinical Study Unveils Breakthrough Drug Candidate for Treating Severe Liver Fibrosis

Contributor: Megha Walia

Jan' 26: A preclinical study conducted by McMaster University reveals a promising new drug, **EVT0185**, developed by Espervita Therapeutics, that can prevent and reverse severe liver fibrosis. This breakthrough offers hope for millions suffering from liver disease, particularly MASH. The drug also helps control blood sugar, reduce cholesterol, and eliminate fat build-up. Clinical trials are expected by 2027 (Source).

ECHA's OSOA Upgrade: One Substance, Unified Data, Faster EU Chemical Risk Decisions

Contributor: Ganesh B and Jiju Narayanan

Jan' 26: Under the EU "One Substance, One Assessment" (OSOA) package, ECHA is expanding its role to streamline and harmonize chemical safety evaluations. Key moves include building a shared EU chemicals data platform, strengthening monitoring and early risk identification, and generating/curating evidence to improve transparency and efficiency. ECHA will also support wider regulatory science tasks (e.g., RoHS, POPs waste limits, and medical-device hazardous substance guidance) (Source).

MoCRA Tightens FDA Records Access: New Compliance Expectations for Cosmetics Industry

Contributor: Anamika Pahari

Jan' 26: The FDA has issued draft guidance outlining expanded industry obligations under MoCRA, clarifying records access authorities under Sections 605, 610 and amended Section 704(a)(1) of the FD&C Act. Responsible persons and facilities are required to provide adverse event, manufacturing, distribution and safety substantiation records in SAHCOD-related circumstances (Source).

FDA Draft Guidance: Bayesian Evidence Borrowing to Modernize Clinical Trials

Contributor: Basharat Ahmad Sofi

Jan' 26: The U.S. FDA released a draft guidance to help sponsors use Bayesian statistics in clinical trials to support safety and efficacy for INDs, NDAs, BLAs and supplements. Fulfilling a PDUFA VII commitment, it outlines when Bayesian methods fit, how to select priors, address estimands and missing data, and document/report analyses. Examples include borrowing prior-study data (e.g., REBYOTA). Comments due in 60 days (Source).

CBER's 2026 Guidance Roadmap: CGT, CAR-T, Blood Safety and Next-Gen Vaccines

Contributor: Latika Sharma

Jan' 26: FDA's CBER (Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research) released its 2026 guidance priority list, proposing 35 guidances across blood/blood components, therapeutic products, and vaccines/allergenics. Nineteen focus on therapeutics, including CGT FAQs, human/animal-derived materials in CGT, and CAR-T for non-oncology uses. Planned topics also cover blood collection/processing systems, hepatitis testing and risk reduction, CMC for allergenic products, combination vaccines, COVID-19/flu data needs, pregnancy vaccines, e-submission formats for BIMO, and alternative microbial testing methods (Source).

Volkswagen Commits Long-Term To Gasoline Hot Hatches

Contributor: Nitesh Kumar

Jan' 26: Volkswagen is committed to keeping ICE-powered hot hatches, including the Golf GTI and Golf R, despite stricter EU emissions regulations. The Golf R may get more power, potentially nearing 400 horsepower. VW will update its EA888 Evo4 engine to meet Euro 7 standards. Electric GTIs are also in development (Source).

China Has A Plan To Avoid European Tariffs: Team Up With Ford

Contributor: Nitesh Kumar

Jan’ 26: Ford and Geely are in advanced talks to use Ford’s Valencia plant for Geely’s vehicle production, helping Geely avoid EU tariffs on Chinese EVs and increasing Ford’s factory utilization. This partnership reflects the auto industry’s shift towards collaboration to navigate trade measures and rising costs (Source).

BMW’s Big Engines Will Continue, Even The V12

Contributor: Sachin Patel

Jan’ 26: BMW is ensuring its inline-six, V8, and Rolls-Royce’s V12 engines meet Euro 7 standards, allowing them to continue despite stricter emissions regulations. The next-generation engines are optimized for compliance, and BMW plans to offer both ICE and electric models, maintaining variety in powertrains for the foreseeable future (Source).

BMW Has A New Logo—And Soon Every Model Will Wear It

Contributor: Sachin Patel

Jan' 26 BMW’s new logo, first seen on the iX3, will be on all models starting next month. The updated roundel features subtle changes, including different hues, textures, and a flatter design without the inner chrome circle. BMW’s M performance logo will also receive updates in February (Source).

Sisvel Launches Wi-Fi Multimode SEP Patent Pool

Contributor: Jitendra Shreemukh

Jan' 26: Sisvel announced the launch of its Wi-Fi Multimode patent pool, a standard essential patent (SEP) licensing program that covers both Wi-Fi 6 (802.11ax) and Wi-Fi 7 (802.11be) technologies in a single, unified pool. The pool brings together patents from 10 founding patent owners, including Huawei, KPN, Mitsubishi Electric, Orange, Panasonic, Philips, SK Telecom, Wilus, ZTE, and affiliate Aegis 11 SA, marking a strategic evolution from the earlier Wi-Fi 6-only program. As part of the launch, Sony Group Corporation has already taken a license, demonstrating early implementer engagement (Source).

InterDigital & Sony Ink Multi-Tech Patent License with LG Electronics (Including ATSC 3.0)

Contributor: Jitendra Shreemukh

Jan' 26: InterDigital, Inc. announced a new patent license agreement with LG Electronics under its joint licensing program with Sony covering LG's digital TVs and computer monitors. The deal includes rights to technologies such as ATSC 3.0 broadcast standards, Wi-Fi, and video codec, reflecting broad SEP-relevant coverage across broadcast and connectivity domains. InterDigital highlighted the importance of its innovations in video, broadcast, and wireless technologies for modern devices, and described the negotiations as amicable with a clear commercial focus (Source).

Nokia–Hisense Deal Ends Patent Battles: Multi-Year Video Tech License Signed

Contributor: Jitendra Shreemukh

Jan' 26: Nokia announced a multi-year patent license agreement with Hisense covering Nokia's video technologies used in Hisense televisions. Hisense will make royalty payments, and the agreement resolves all patent-related litigation between the parties in all jurisdictions. Nokia also stated this is its first patent license agreement with Hisense (terms confidential) (Source).

OPPO Joins VVC Advance Patent Pool & Extends HEVC Advance License

Contributor: Jitendra Shreemukh

Jan' 26: OPPO and Access Advance LLC announced that OPPO has officially joined the VVC Advance Patent Pool as a licensee and concurrently renewed its HEVC Advance license—expanding its participation across Access Advance's core video codec licensing programs. The VVC Advance pool licenses essential patents for the VVC/H.266 video compression standard, which offers significantly improved performance over HEVC for high-resolution formats such as 4K, 8K, and HDR. With this dual engagement, OPPO now participates across all three major video codec pools managed by Access Advance, signaling a deeper strategic IP collaboration (Source).

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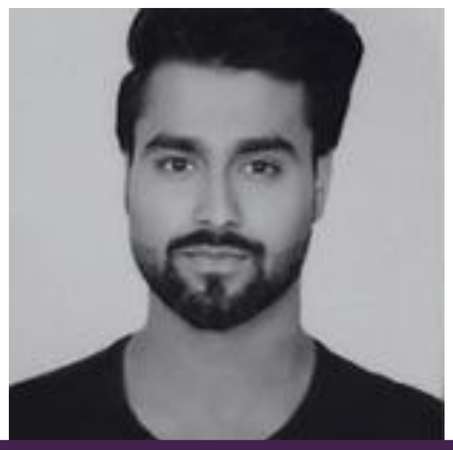

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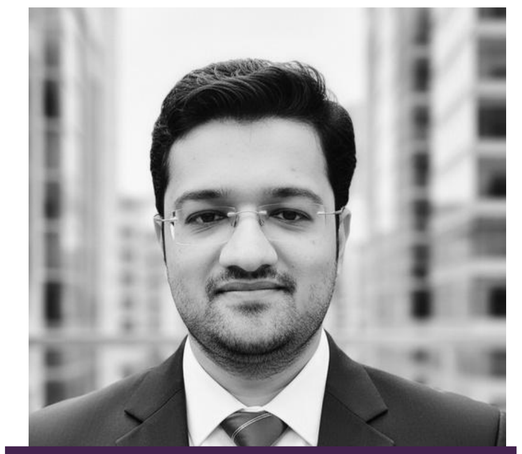

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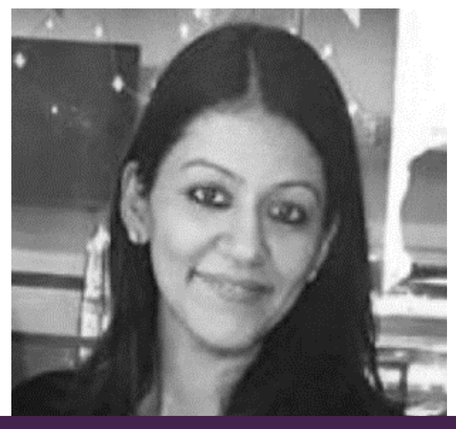

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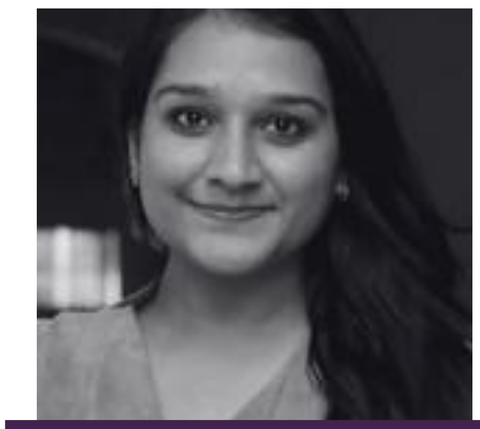

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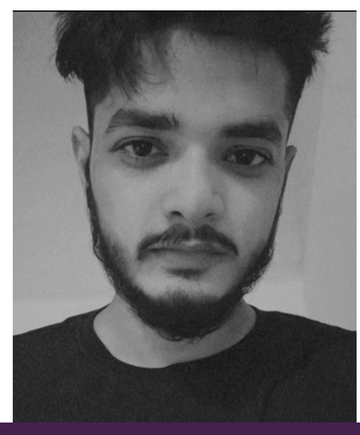

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