



RACE WEEKLY INTELLIGENCE BRIEF

RETINA

AI · CYBERSECURITY · CLOUD · LEADERSHIP

THIS WEEK'S COVER:

Data Is the New Executive Responsibility | The Rise of the Real-Time CDO**FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK**

Issue #1 asked who owns your AI agents. Issue #2 asked who secures them. This week, we ask the question that sits upstream of both: who owns your data? India's enterprises have spent five years investing in AI tools and three years debating data privacy. Almost none have answered the foundational question, is data a strategic asset managed at board level, or an IT responsibility managed in silos? The difference between those two answers is the difference between organisations that lead with AI and those that lag with it.

**SIGNAL****94%**

of CDAOs expect their influence to grow over the next 12 months, with 63% describing themselves as the primary driver of data and analytics decisions in their organisation

*Deloitte CDAO Survey 2026, March 3 2026***95%**

believe their organisation is not fully leveraging the value of data — including 53% who are extremely or very concerned about this gap

Deloitte CDAO Survey 2026, March 3 2026

THE DATA AGENDA — BY THE NUMBERS

78%

of CDAOs say AI has given them more decision-making power than any previous technology wave — and 78% describe their organisations as actively implementing data modernisation

*Deloitte CDAO Survey 2026, March 3 2026***\$126 Bn**

India's AI market opportunity by 2030 — with enterprise AI leading growth and data infrastructure identified as the single largest bottleneck to realising it

Google × Inc42 Bharat AI Startups Report 2026



The CDO Gets a Seat at the Table — and a Mandate to Prove ROI

The Deloitte CDAO survey and Salesforce's completed \$8B Informatica acquisition confirm data leadership has permanently entered the boardroom

For a decade, India's enterprises debated whether a Chief Data Officer was a luxury or a necessity. In the week of 18 May 2026, that debate is over.

Deloitte's 2026 Chief Data and Analytics Officer Survey — conducted between August and September 2025 across 100 C-suite executives from companies with \$1 billion or more in revenue — delivers a clear verdict: 94% of CDAOs expect their organisational influence to grow over the next 12 months, with 65% reporting that AI adoption has made their role more critical than ever before. But the headline finding that should get every CEO's attention is this: 56% feel intense pressure to prove direct ROI on data investments. The exploratory data budget era is finished. Every data investment now needs a business case, a timeline, and a measurable outcome.

Meanwhile, the completed Salesforce acquisition of Informatica — an \$8 billion transaction finalised on November 18, 2025 — signals a structural market shift. When the world's largest CRM platform buys the world's most comprehensive data governance and quality platform, it is not just a product decision. As Salesforce Chair and CEO Marc Benioff stated at close: 'You have to get your data right to get your AI right. Without clean, connected, trusted data there is no intelligence — only hallucination.'

One more finding from Deloitte that boards should address immediately: only 19% of CDAOs surveyed said their organisation has 'robust' privacy and guardrail tools to ensure data privacy. That number, combined with DPDP Phase 2 enforcement six months away, creates a governance exposure that is no longer acceptable.

Sources: *Deloitte CDAO Survey 2026 · Salesforce Completes Acquisition of Informatica*

RETINA TAKE

Every CEO reading this should ask one question in their next leadership meeting: 'Do we have a CDAO? If not, who in this organisation is accountable for data quality, data strategy, and the data readiness of our AI initiatives?' If that question generates silence or a circular answer, you are investing in AI infrastructure on a foundation that has not yet been built.

 PANORAMA

THREE FORCES SHAPING YOUR DECISIONS

1

CDO
SIGNAL**Data as a Product: From Concept to Non-Negotiable Standard**

Gartner's 2026 analysis confirms that treating data as a managed, reusable product — with defined ownership, SLAs, and documented business logic — is no longer innovative thinking. It is an industry expectation. One in two CDAOs now considers technology landscape optimisation a primary responsibility, and Salesforce's \$8 billion acquisition of Informatica signals the consolidation wave is structural, not cyclical. For CDOs and CTOs: if your data architecture still looks like a collection of point solutions held together by bespoke integrations, your AI investments are building on unstable ground. The time to consolidate is now — before the next AI project fails on data quality, not model capability.

Source: Gartner / ITBrief Data Management Trends 2026–2027

2

INDIA
EDGE**India's Data Engineering Advantage Is Becoming a Global Differentiator**

India's AI ecosystem raised \$4.98 billion in venture capital in the past year, deployed over 38,000 GPUs nationwide, and is home to the world's highest concentration of certified cloud architects and AI engineers. The government's 10,000 crore IndiaAI Mission is creating a data infrastructure flywheel: more compute, more talent, more production-grade deployments. According to Google and Inc42's Bharat AI Startups Report 2026, India's AI market could become a \$126 billion opportunity by 2030, with a GDP impact of \$1.7 trillion by 2035. For enterprise CHROs: the global market is competing for the same data talent pool you are hiring from. Retention of data engineering capability has become a strategic priority, not an HR function.

Source: Google × Inc42 Bharat AI Startups Report 2026 / Top 20 Indian AI Companies 2026

3

ROI
RISK**The \$6.8M Warning: Data Investment Without a Roadmap Is Money Lost**

A pharmaceutical company invested \$6.8 million in data infrastructure over three years. Cloud migration completed. Data lake operational. Analytics tools deployed. When the board asked for ROI justification, the CDO could not connect investments to business outcomes. The problem was not technology — it was the absence of a data strategy roadmap. This case, featured in The Executive Outlook, is not a cautionary tale. It is the most common data investment failure pattern in enterprise India today. Organisations initiate cloud migrations and deploy AI tools without first defining what business problems they are solving, what data quality standards are required, or what success looks like in 12 months. For CFOs: before approving any data or AI investment, demand a three-question answer — What decision does this enable? What data quality standard does it require? How will we measure its impact in 12 months?

Source: The Executive Outlook — Complete Guide to Data Strategy Roadmap 2026



Your AI Is Only as Good as the Data Beneath It — And Most Indian Enterprises Have Not Fixed the Foundation

By **Dr. Shinu Abhi** · Director – Corporate Training, REVA Academy for Corporate Excellence

There is a question we ask every batch of senior leaders who come through RACE's executive programmes: 'How much of your organisation's data is clean, labelled, governed, and accessible to your AI systems right now?' The answers range from confident estimates that collapse under scrutiny to honest admissions of 'we don't actually know.' That uncertainty is the single most expensive problem in Indian enterprise AI today. Not the choice of model. Not the cost of GPU compute. Not the shortage of AI engineers. The data foundation.

Deloitte has been consistent in its analysis: data quality and access is the number one priority for AI and agentic AI success, cited by 61% of CDAOs in the 2026 survey. Yet when you examine how Indian enterprises budget for AI, the lion's share goes to models, platforms, and talent, while data governance, data cataloguing, and data quality infrastructure receive a fraction of the investment.

The consequence is predictable. AI models trained on inconsistent, siloed, or poorly labelled data produce inconsistent outputs. Agentic AI systems that cannot reliably access high-quality data make wrong decisions at machine speed. The failure mode is not dramatic; it is slow and corrosive: AI recommendations that leaders stop trusting, analytics platforms that get bypassed for gut instinct, and AI projects that produce strategically wrong and technically correct outputs.

Sources: *Deloitte CDAO Survey 2026* · *Salesforce Informatica Acquisition Press Release*

"Effective data leadership is a foundational element of AI success, and today's CDAOs are increasingly in the driver's seat for enterprise AI initiatives. Organisations that don't have a CDAO should consider creating one."

Ashish Verma

Chief Data and Analytics Officer, Deloitte · CDAO Survey 2026

The path forward requires executive will. Three disciplines that separate data-mature organisations from data-rich ones: First, treat data as a product — with owners, SLAs, quality standards, and documented business logic. Second, build a data contract framework — formal agreements between data producers and consumers. Third, appoint a CDAO or equivalent not as a technology role but as a business leadership role with board-level accountability for data strategy, AI readiness, and governance.

RACE PERSPECTIVE

The organisations that will dominate enterprise AI in 2027 are not those with the biggest AI budgets. They are the ones that invested quietly in data quality, data governance, and data leadership in 2025 and 2026. The AI model is the visible tip of the iceberg. The data foundation beneath it is what determines whether the ship moves forward or sinks.

**BLIND SPOT**

WHAT MOST LEADERS ARE MISSING THIS WEEK

The Real-Time Gap: India's Enterprises Are Running Yesterday's Data for Today's Decisions

Most Indian enterprise dashboards refresh every 24 hours. Most enterprise AI models are retrained monthly. Most data warehouses process in batch. Meanwhile, customer behaviour, market signals, fraud patterns, and operational anomalies are changing in milliseconds. The competitive advantage of real-time data infrastructure is not theoretical — it is already being operationalised by the enterprises that will outpace you.

1. Real-time fraud detection: HDFC Bank's AI fraud system processes 12 million transactions daily with sub-second detection. Banks still running batch reconciliation are structurally more vulnerable.
2. Streaming analytics vs. static reports: The gap between an enterprise that acts on live data and one that acts on yesterday's report is not operational — it is strategic. Real-time logistics, live financial dashboards, and streaming supply chain signals are now table stakes.
3. The CDO's new mandate: If your organisation's CDAO cannot explain why real-time data architecture matters for your AI agents — or what streaming infrastructure your AI depends on — that capability gap is a board-level risk.

**ZOOM**

INDIAN STARTUP CASE STUDY — THE INNOVATION LENS

Gnani.ai: The Bengaluru Startup That Turned Voice Into Enterprise Intelligence

Case Study: From IIT Speech Lab to 200+ Enterprise Clients in Japan, Indonesia, the Middle East, and the US

Source: Business Standard — Gnani.ai raises \$10M Series B, March 31 2026

THE PROBLEM THEY SOLVE

Every enterprise has a data problem hiding in plain sight: unstructured voice data. Customer calls, sales conversations, support interactions, field agent reports — billions of words spoken every day, entirely invisible to enterprise analytics systems. Gnani.ai converts that spoken data into structured, actionable enterprise intelligence in real time.

THE PRODUCT

A voice-first generative AI platform with speech-to-text, voice biometrics, real-time translation, conversational automation, and agent assistance built natively for enterprise workflows. Their flagship: Vachana STT — an enterprise-grade Indic speech recognition model trained on over 1 million hours of voice data across 1,056 domains and 22 Indian languages. No Western model comes close to this linguistic depth.

THE TRACTION

\$10M Series B raised from Aavishkaar Capital and Info Edge Ventures, March 31 2026. Annual revenue of 57 Cr (FY2025). 200+ enterprise clients globally. Added 100+ clients in the current financial year. Expanding in Japan, Indonesia, the Middle East, and the US. Part of the Government of India's IndiaAI Mission. Founded in Bengaluru (2016) by Ganesh Gopalan and Ananth Nagaraj.

THE DATA ANGLE

Gnani.ai is not just a voice AI company — it is a data creation engine. Every conversation it processes generates structured data that feeds customer intelligence, compliance monitoring, sales analytics, and operational insights. For enterprises that have invested heavily in text-based data pipelines, Gnani.ai represents the missing layer: the unstructured voice data that no current enterprise data strategy has figured out how to use.

What This Means for CXOs

CDO

Voice data is the largest unstructured data source in most enterprises — and the most under-exploited. If your data strategy does not include a plan for voice AI integration, you are leaving a significant intelligence gap open.

CHRO

Vachana STT processing 1 million hours of voice data in 22 Indian languages means Tier 2 and Tier 3 talent markets are now accessible to enterprise workflows that previously required English literacy. This changes your hiring geography.

CFO

At 57 Cr ARR with 200+ enterprise clients, Gnani.ai's unit economics signal a category that is maturing fast. Evaluate enterprise voice AI as infrastructure with verifiable ROI, not as innovation experimentation.

CEO

India built the world's largest Indic voice AI dataset before any global model thought to try. When global platforms have no incentive to solve your specific problem, Indian startups build the solution first. Back them.



The Data-Driven Decision Maker

Pradeepta Mishra

Vice President of Artificial Intelligence,
Beghou Consulting

Q1

Every enterprise today claims to be “data-driven.” In your experience, what separates organisations that merely talk about being data-driven from those that truly practise it?

A

The real difference is whether data influences decisions or just reporting. Most companies have dashboards and AI pilots. Truly data-driven organizations:

- embed data into daily business decisions,
- make business leaders accountable for outcomes,
- and operationalize AI at scale instead of running endless PoCs.

In my experience, successful enterprises build continuous feedback loops where sales, customer engagement, operations, and strategy are constantly refined using data. A company becomes genuinely data-driven when, decisions are routinely challenged and improved using data — even when it contradicts intuition or hierarchy.

Data maturity is not a technology question. It is a leadership culture question. And it starts with whether the CEO is willing to be overruled by an analysis. If they are not — no CDAO, no platform, no AI investment will make that organisation data-driven.

Q2

The Deloitte CDAO survey says 56% of chief data officers feel intense pressure to prove ROI on data investments. How should the CDO frame the ROI conversation with the board?

A

I simplify ROI into three buckets:

- Business impact — revenue growth, productivity, cost reduction, customer engagement, faster execution.
- Decision velocity — AI reduces the time between signal and action, creating competitive advantage.
- Strategic capability — platforms, governance, and reusable AI infrastructure become long-term enterprise assets.

Boards respond best when AI is discussed as a business transformation lever, not a technology experiment.

Q3

What is the one capability most Indian enterprise data teams are missing that limits their impact?

A

The biggest gap is the ability to operationalize AI at enterprise scale. India has strong technical talent, but many teams still struggle to move from:

- PoCs to production,
- analytics to decision systems,
- and models to measurable business outcomes.

The next generation of successful data teams will combine:

- domain expertise,
- AI product thinking,
- workflow automation,
- governance and,
- business transformation capability.

Note: CANDID represents a representative editorial perspective compiled from public commentary. RACE welcomes direct contributions from CXO leaders. Contact: retina@reva.edu.in



5 Roles With Exploding Demand · Week of 18 May 2026 · Focus: Data Leadership & Analytics

#	Role & Critical Skills	CTC Range*	Source
1	Chief Data & Analytics Officer (CDAO) Data strategy · AI governance · Board communication · Data product management	₹80L–₹2Cr+	Deloitte CDAO Survey 2026 (India CDO compensation benchmarks); upGrad Analytics Salary Report 2026
2	Data Platform Architect Databricks · Delta Lake · Apache Kafka · Lakehouse architecture · FinOps for data	₹40L–₹80L	Taggd India AI Engineer Salary Report 2026
3	Data Governance Lead Data cataloguing · DPDP compliance · Metadata management · Data contracts · Collibra	₹28L–₹60L	India Decoding Jobs 2026 (Taggd × CII)
4	ML Engineer (Real-Time Systems) Feature stores · Streaming ML · Kafka · Flink · Model serving at enterprise scale	₹30L–₹65L	Taggd India AI Engineer Salary Report 2026
5	Analytics Translator / Insights Lead Business storytelling · Tableau · Power BI · Decision frameworks · Stakeholder communication	₹18L–₹40L	upGrad Data & Analytics Salary Report 2026

* Salary Transparency Note: CDAO compensation in India is highly variable by sector, company size, and mandate. The 80L–2Cr+ range reflects mid-to-large enterprise profiles in financial services, technology, and healthcare. For emerging roles (Data Governance Lead, Analytics Translator), ranges are market estimates — India-specific verified salary surveys for these titles remain nascent. All FLASH data is for guidance only. Full sources:

1. <https://taggd.in/blogs/ai-engineer-salary/>
2. <https://www.deloitte.com/us/en/about/press-room/chief-data-and-analytics-officer-survey-finds-cdao-acting-as-ai-trailblazers.html>
3. <https://www.upgrad.com/blog/data-analyst-salary-in-bangalore/>



RACE Research Radar highlights the latest publications by REVA Academy for Corporate Excellence learners, mentors, and faculty across AI, Cybersecurity, Cloud, Analytics, and emerging technologies. These papers reflect RACE's focus on applied, industry-relevant research that moves from academic inquiry to real-world enterprise impact.

COMPUTER VISION · RAILWAY SAFETY · DEEP LEARNING

Multi-Task Safety Monitoring for Railway Crossings using Deep Learning and Computer Vision

Anand V, Dr. J. B. Simha, Dr. Shinu Abhi · ICMSCI 2026

A deep learning and computer vision-based safety monitoring system for railway crossings. The work uses YOLOv8-based vision techniques for gate-status classification and obstacle detection, enabling automated monitoring of high-risk railway crossing environments. Particularly relevant for smart transportation systems, railway safety operations, infrastructure monitoring, and public safety applications where real-time visual intelligence can reduce human dependency and improve response time.

ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/11469345

CYBERSECURITY · CIS BENCHMARKS · COMPLIANCE AUTOMATION

Automated Cybersecurity Configuration Assessment & Remediation using CIS Benchmark

Rakesh Giri Bengeri, Sridhar Govardhan, Dr. Rashmi Agarwal

A Python-based cybersecurity configuration assessment and remediation framework aligned with CIS Benchmarks. The solution remotely assesses system and firewall configurations, compares them against CIS standards, generates compliance reports, and enables remediation actions through a user-friendly interface. Highly relevant for IT infrastructure teams, SOC teams, audit teams, and organisations looking to automate security hardening, reduce configuration drift, and improve compliance readiness.

https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-981-95-0183-0_1

LLM SECURITY · SECOPS · CYBERSECURITY ANALYS · AUGMENTATION

LLM Assisted SecOps: A Cognitive Assistant Framework for Cybersecurity Analysts

Harsh Dineshbhai Bakori, Nishanth Kumar Pathi, Dr. Shinu Abhi

A cognitive assistant framework that applies LLMs and AI agents to support cybersecurity analysts in modern SOC environments. The framework is designed to assist with threat detection, alert triage, incident response, investigation support, and analyst decision-making. Particularly relevant for SOC teams struggling with alert fatigue, skill shortages, investigation delays, and the need to bring AI-assisted reasoning into security operations without replacing human oversight.

<https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/11497779>

CLOUD SECURITY · AWS · AUTO-REMEDiation

Cloud Security & Auto-Remediation Framework Using AWS Native Services

Nidhin Dev, Dr. Shinu Abhi, Pradyumn · NQComp 2026

A cloud security and auto-remediation framework using AWS-native services to detect, respond to, and remediate misconfigurations and security risks. The work focuses on building automated cloud governance using services such as AWS Config, Security Hub, Lambda, and related event-driven mechanisms to reduce manual intervention and improve cloud security posture. Particularly relevant for cloud security teams, DevSecOps teams, and enterprises managing AWS environments that require continuous compliance, faster remediation, and scalable security operations.

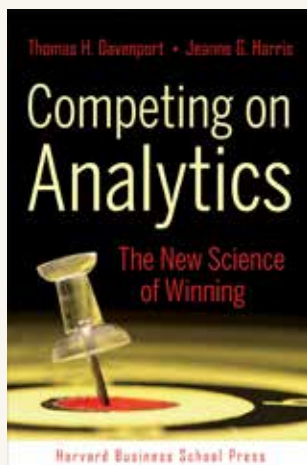
<https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/11497779>

RETINA TAKE

Four deployment-ready systems solving live enterprise and safety problems. RACE's applied AI research output is available to enterprise technology teams – if your organisation wants to explore collaboration, contact race@reva.edu. Full archive at racelit.netlify.app

BOOK SHELF

RETINA'S READ OF THE WEEK



RETINA RECOMMENDS · THIS WEEK'S THEME

Competing on Analytics: The New Science of Winning

Thomas H. Davenport & Jeanne G. Harris · Harvard Business Review Press, 2007

Published in 2007 and still devastatingly relevant in 2026, this is the book that first made the case that analytics capability, not product, not capital, not brand; is the primary source of competitive advantage in the modern enterprise. Davenport and Harris studied companies like Amazon, Capital One, and UPS that built their entire operating models around data insight. Two decades later, the Indian enterprises that have internalised this lesson are the ones winning. The ones that haven't are the ones asking why their AI investments are not producing results. Every CDO, CHRO, and CEO should read this before approving their next data strategy budget.

RACE PULSE

EVENTS · COMMUNITY · WHAT'S COMING

UPCOMING · MAY 30 2026 BATCH

CERTIFIED AGENTIC AI ENGINEER

Applications are now open for the new batch of Certified Agentic AI Engineers at REVA Academy for Corporate Excellence, REVA University. The programme is designed for professionals looking to build practical expertise in LLMs, AI Agents, Multi-Agent Systems, Agentic Workflows, Governance, and Capstone-based implementation. Learn from industry mentors, work on real-world use cases, and build deployable Agentic AI solutions.

Apply now:

<https://race.reva.edu.in/certified-agentic-ai-engineer/>

UPCOMING · SEPTEMBER 2026 BATCH

APPLY BY 31 JULY

Applications are now open for all six RACE Master's & PG Programmes — Business Analytics (#1 India), Artificial Intelligence (#3 India), Cybersecurity (#5 India), and Cloud Architecture & Security. Weekend format. AICTE/UGC approved. Industry mentors from Amazon, Microsoft, AWS, EC-Council, Terralogic, IBM and more.

Apply now: race.reva.edu.in

UPCOMING BATCH · CERTIFIED AGENTIC AI ENGINEER

Applications are now open for the new batch of Certified Agentic AI Engineers at REVA Academy for Corporate Excellence, REVA University.

The programme starts on 30th May 2026 and is designed for professionals looking to build practical expertise in LLMs, AI Agents, Multi-Agent Systems, Agentic Workflows, Governance, and Capstone-based implementation.

Learn from industry mentors, work on real-world use cases, and build deployable Agentic AI solutions.

Apply now: <https://race.reva.edu.in/certified-agentic-ai-engineer/>

RACE PROGRAMMES

REVA Academy for Corporate Excellence · REVA University · Bengaluru · AICTE / UGC Approved · Weekend Batches · Industry Mentors

Master's & PG Programmes

New Batch: September 2026 · 12–24 months · Weekend · For Working Professionals

#1 IN INDIA · ANALYTICS INDIA MAGAZINE ANALYTICS PG Diploma / M.Sc. in BUSINESS ANALYTICS AWS Academy · Microsoft Azure 12–24 Months	#3 IN INDIA · TECHGIG ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE M.Tech. in ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AWS Academy · Microsoft Azure 24 Months	#3 IN INDIA · TECHGIG ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE PG Diploma / M.Sc. in ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AWS Academy · Microsoft Azure 12–24 Months
#5 IN INDIA · ANALYTICS INDIA MAGAZINE CYBERSECURITY M.Tech. in CYBERSECURITY EC-Council · Microsoft Azure · Terralogic Inc. 24 Months	#5 IN INDIA · ANALYTICS INDIA MAGAZINE CYBERSECURITY PG Diploma / M.Sc. in CYBERSECURITY EC-Council · Microsoft Azure · Terralogic Inc. 12–24 Months	CLOUD PG Diploma / M.Sc. in CLOUD ARCHITECTURE & SECURITY AWS Academy · Microsoft Azure 12–24 Months

Short-Term Certification Programmes

100 Hours · Project-Driven · Customisable for Organisations

LEADERSHIP 8–12 weeks TECHNO-FUNCTIONAL LEADERSHIP Executive presence, decision-making, leading tech-driven teams. Built for mid-to-senior managers.	CYBERSECURITY 8–12 weeks CYBERSECURITY & SOC OPERATIONS Threat detection, incident response, SIEM/SOAR. Hands-on in RACE's live Security Operations Centre.
AI ENGINEER 8–12 weeks AI ENGINEERING CERTIFICATION Data pipelines, model training, LLMs, deployment. Real production projects every batch.	CLOUD 8–12 weeks CLOUD ARCHITECTURE & DEVSECOPS Multi-cloud, IaC, secure CI/CD on real AWS/Azure/GCP environments. Not demos.
AGENTIC AI 4–6 weeks AGENTIC AI SYSTEMS DESIGN Multi-agent systems using LangChain, LangGraph, CrewAI. Capstone: deployed autonomous agent.	DATA & AI 12 weeks DATA SCIENCE & BUSINESS ANALYTICS Statistics to ML to BI. Python, SQL, Power BI, Tableau on real business datasets.

Enroll with us · race@reva.edu · race.reva.edu.in

THIS WEEK, ASK YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM
"Who in this organisation is accountable for the quality of the data
our AI systems are trained on, and what is their board-level
mandate?"

RETINA PUBLISHES EVERY SUNDAY · FORWARD TO A CXO YOU RESPECT