'Hexaware: 2nd fastest growing brand'

Hexaware Technologies Limited, a multinational provider of information technology solutions and services, announced its inclusion in Brand Finance's 'IT Services 25-2026' report, which has positioned Hexaware among the world's twenty-five most valuable IT services brands. Within the cohort of Indian peer-group organisations, Hexaware has been designated as the second-fastest-growing brand in terms of brand valuation, building upon its inaugural appearance in the ranking the previous year.

Brand Finance, recognized globally as the preeminent brand valuation consultancy firm, has documented year-over-year expansion in Hexaware's brand value for 2026, with projections indicating the company's trajectory toward approaching the one billion United States dollar threshold within the subsequent two-year period. The organization's brand value has experienced approximately 140 percent growth since 2021, underpinned by a twelve-digit enhancement in brand strength metrics, culminating in an AA+ rating designation. With respect to brand strength parameters, Hexaware occupies the seventh position among Indian IT services brands and the fourteenth position in the global rankings.

"We take considerable pride in our recognition as the second-fastest-growing Indian IT services brand by brand value," stated R Srikrishna, Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director of Hexaware Technologies. "Our commitment to an AI-first strategic approach has been instrumental because it enables us to create customer value more consistently at scale, and that organizational discipline is now being reflected in the manner in which the brand is valued by external assessors."

Nidhi Alexander, Chief Marketing Officer at Hexaware Technologies, elaborated: "A 140 percent increase in brand value over a five-year period is a reflection of the trust and confidence that clients place in Hexaware. Brand strength achieved at this pace is hard-earned, and it reflects the dedicated work that our entire organization has invested in building trust and delivering measurable results for our clients."

"Brand value represents fundamentally the financial expression of a brand's capacity to generate economic benefits through the cultivation of strong relationships with its stakeholders," observed David Haigh, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Brand Finance. "In an IT services marketplace that is experiencing rapid adoption of artificial intelligence technologies, this recognition, together with Hexaware's demonstrated growth in both brand value and brand strength, is consistent with the impact we observe from its strategic focus on AI-led innovation and a people-centric organizational culture."

The Brand Finance 'IT Services 25 2026' report constitutes an integral component of Brand Finance's annual comprehensive review and evaluation of the most valuable and strongest IT services brands operating worldwide.

Techies invited for Future Warfare Course

The third edition of the tri-services Future Warfare Course commenced at the Manekshaw Centre, marking a significant step in the Indian Armed Forces' efforts to integrate advanced technology with operational strategy.

Scheduled to run till 25, 2026, the course is being conducted under the aegis of the Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff (HQ IDS) in partnership with the Centre for Joint Warfare Studies (CENJOWS). The initiative aligns with the vision of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan to future-proof the armed forces against the complex challenges of modern combat.

Strategic shift in doctrine: Building on the success of the inaugural course held in September 2024, this expanded three-week program features an enhanced curriculum designed to provide a holistic analysis of India's security challenges. The primary objective is to develop an "erudite understanding" of how emerging technologies are reshaping warfare, necessitating a comprehensive review of existing concepts, doctrines, strategies, and Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTPs).

Officials noted that the course will move beyond theory, incorporating practical demonstrations of emerging technologies and visits to institutions critical to the nation's defense capabilities.

Civil-military and industrial synergy: A key feature of this edition is its diverse participation. The cohort includes officers from the Army, Navy, and Air Force, ranging in seniority from Majors to Major Generals. This mix is intended to bridge the gap between the technical expertise of junior officers and the strategic, operational experience of senior commanders.

Crucially, the course also integrates representatives from the defense industry, including startups, MSMEs, DPSUs, and private sector players. This interface aims to align the operational priorities of the military with the capabilities of the indigenous defense industry, fostering a free-flowing dialogue on the requirements of futuristic war-fighting.

Expanding scope of security: Reflecting the changing nature of global conflict, the curriculum has been broadened to include non-traditional security domains. Experts, including veterans, ex-ambassadors, and academic professionals, will lead sessions on critical and rare earth elements, supply chain vulnerabilities, and the impact of regional and global geopolitics on future operations.

The course serves as a platform for threadbare debate, ensuring that India's security planning remains agile and responsive to both technological advancements and geopolitical shifts.

AI that talks to itself learns smarter

Talking to yourself may feel uniquely human, but it turns out this habit can also help machines learn. Internal dialogue helps people organise ideas, weigh choices, and make sense of emotions. New research shows that a similar process can improve how artificial intelligence learns and adapts. In a study published recently, researchers from the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology (OIST) found that AI systems perform better across many tasks when they are trained to use inner speech alongside short-term memory. The findings suggest that learning is shaped not only by the structure of an AI system, but also by how it interacts with itself during training. As first author Dr. Jeffrey Queißer, Staff Scientist at OIST's Cognitive Neurorobotics Research Unit, explains, "This study highlights the importance of self-interactions in how we learn. By structuring training data in a way that teaches our system to talk to itself, we show that learning is shaped not only by the architecture of our AI systems, but by the interaction dynamics embedded within our training procedures."

To test this idea, the researchers combined self-directed internal speech, described as quiet "mumbling," with a specialised working memory system. This approach allowed their AI models to learn more efficiently, adjust to unfamiliar situations, and handle multiple tasks at once. The results showed clear gains in flexibility and overall performance compared with systems that relied on memory alone.

A central goal of the team's work is content agnostic information processing. This refers to the ability to apply learned skills beyond the exact situations encountered during training, using general rules rather than memorized examples.

"Rapid task switching and solving unfamiliar problems is something we humans do easily every day. But for AI, it's much more challenging," says Dr. Queißer. "That's why we take an interdisciplinary approach, blending developmental neuroscience and psychology with machine learning and robotics amongst other fields, to find new ways to think about learning and inform the future of AI."

The researchers began by examining memory design in AI models, focusing on working memory and its role in generalization.

Working memory is the short-term ability to hold and use information, whether that means following instructions or doing quick mental calculations. By testing tasks with different levels of difficulty, the team compared various memory structures.

They found that models with multiple working memory slots (temporary containers for pieces of information) performed better on challenging problems, such as reversing sequences or recreating patterns. These tasks require holding several pieces of information at once and manipulating them in the correct order.

When the team added targets that encouraged the system to talk to itself a specific number of times, performance improved even further. The biggest gains appeared during multitasking and in tasks that required many steps.

"Our combined system is

NASA rover completes AI-planned mars drive

The team behind NASA's six-wheeled Mars explorer tested a vision-enabled artificial intelligence system to map a safe route across the martian surface without relying on human route planners. NASA's Perseverance rover has now completed the first drives on another planet that were planned by artificial intelligence. The milestone demonstration took place on Dec. 8 and 10 and was led by NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Southern California. During the test, generative AI was used to select waypoints for the rover, a complex planning task that is normally handled by human experts on earth.

"This demonstration shows how far our capabilities have advanced and broadens how we will explore other worlds," said NASA Administrator Jared Isaacman. "Autonomous technologies like this can help missions to operate more efficiently, respond to challenging terrain, and increase science return as distance from Earth grows. It's a strong example of teams applying new technology carefully and responsibly in real operations."

For the demonstration, engineers used a form of generative AI known as vision-language models to examine existing data from JPL's surface mission dataset. The system analyzed the same images and information that human planners typically use, then identified waypoint locations so Perseverance could travel safely across difficult Martian terrain.

The work was coordinated from JPL's Rover Operations Center (ROC) and carried out in collaboration with Anthropic, using the company's Claude AI models.

Mars sits an average of about 140 million miles (225 million kilometers) from Earth. That distance creates long communication delays, making real-time control of a rover impossible. For nearly three decades, rover navigation has depended on human drivers who carefully study terrain data and plan routes in advance.

These planners design paths made up of waypoints, usually spaced no more than 330 feet (100 meters) apart, to reduce the risk of encountering hazards. The completed plans are sent through NASA's Deep Space Network, and the rover carries out the instructions on its own.

During Perseverance's drives on the 1,707 and 1,709 Martian days, known as sols, the mission team shifted that responsibility to generative AI. The system examined high-resolution orbital images captured by the HiRISE (High Resolution Imaging Science Experiment) camera aboard NASA's Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter, along with terrain slope data from digital elevation models.

Using this information, the AI identified important surface features such as bedrock, outcrops, boulder fields, and sand ripples. It then produced a continuous driving path that included all necessary waypoints.

Before sending the commands to Mars, engineers ran the AI-generated instructions through JPL's digital twin (virtual replica of the rover). This step checked more than 500,000 telemetry variables to ensure the plan would work safely with Perseverance's flight software.

On December 8, Perseverance traveled 689 feet (210 meters) using the AI-generated plan. Two days later, it drove another 807 feet (246 metres).

"The fundamental elements of generative AI are showing a lot of promise in streamlining the pillars of autonomous navigation for off-planet driving: perception (seeing the rocks and ripples), localization (knowing where we are), and planning and control (deciding and executing the safest path)," said Vandi Verma, a space roboticist at JPL and a member of the Perseverance engineering team. "We are moving towards a day where generative AI and other smart tools will help our surface rovers handle kilometer-scale drives while minimizing operator workload, and flag interesting surface features for our science team by scouring huge volumes of rover images."

"Imagine intelligent systems not only on the ground at Earth, but also in edge applications in our rovers, helicopters, drones, and other surface elements trained with the collective wisdom of our NASA engineers, scientists, and astronauts," said Matt Wallace, manager of JPL's Exploration Systems Office. "That is the game-changing technology we need to establish the infrastructure and systems required for a permanent human presence on the Moon and take the U.S. to Mars and beyond."