



## **National Technology Day 2026: As AI transforms shopping, trust becomes the real currency**

“As India’s digital commerce market hurtles toward a \$185B valuation, the industry is confronting a quiet but consequential inflection point. Speed got platforms here. Trust will decide who stays.”

Three years ago, a technology platform's success was measured almost entirely by how fast it could grow. Today, the metric quietly keeping CEOs awake is something far less glamorous: reliability. Not innovation theatre or funding rounds, but whether an order arrived as promised, whether a recommendation was accurate, or whether a first-generation digital shopper in a Tier-3 city received the same quality of experience as a power user in an urban++ area like Bengaluru, Mumbai, or Delhi. As the industry marks National Technology Day, this shift, from hypergrowth to accountable scale, is the story that the numbers are beginning to tell.

India's digital commerce market is valued at USD 185 billion in 2026 and is projected to grow at a CAGR of 15.7% through 2036. A significant 41% of Indian consumers are already using AI-powered shopping tools, the highest proportion of any market studied globally, with a further 40% set to follow. And yet, even as the numbers climb, a more complex truth is emerging beneath the surface. The era of growth-at-all-costs is giving way to something harder to build and far more valuable to own. Call it the Trust Economy.

This is not a story about AI becoming smarter. It is about AI becoming more invisible, more dependable, and more consequential in its reach. The algorithmic systems powering personalization, forecasting, fulfillment, and catalog intelligence are no longer consumer-facing novelties. They are operational infrastructure, the load-bearing walls of modern platform businesses. And increasingly, the question being asked in every product review, every quarterly planning cycle, and every regulatory corridor is this: can these systems be trusted to serve everyone, not just the easiest-to-serve?

### **When the Algorithm Becomes the Architecture**

India's AI market, valued at USD 7.63 billion in 2024, is projected to grow from USD 11.17 billion in 2025 to USD 122.32 billion by 2035, at a CAGR of 42.2%. These are staggering numbers, but they can obscure the more important story: the shift in how AI is being deployed. A few years ago, AI in commerce meant recommendation carousels and chatbots. Today, it means demand forecasting systems that anticipate what a household will need before the household itself knows, catalog intelligence engines that determine whether a product is discoverable or invisible, and fulfillment algorithms that make real-time routing decisions across thousands of dark stores simultaneously.

But trust in a digital ecosystem is not solely an operational or personalization problem. It has a security dimension that is growing harder to ignore. As India's digital transactions multiply across commerce, banking, and public services, the attack surface for bad actors has expanded at precisely the same pace. Dr. Sanjay Katkar, Joint Managing Director at Quick Heal Technologies, has been making this argument longer than most. “Now technology is so intertwined in almost every aspect of our lives, which makes it imperative to ensure the security of our digital ecosystem.” For Katkar, the conversation around responsible innovation is incomplete without a serious reckoning with cybersecurity. “Long before evolving regulatory frameworks and heightened awareness around data privacy, we recognised that cybersecurity must be proactive, intelligent and deeply consumer-

focused. Today, as cyberattacks grow in scale and sophistication, we are strengthening our commitment through AI-powered, Made-in-India innovations, helping consumers, enterprises, and institutions use technology with greater confidence, resilience, and control.”