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#INDIA'S PREMIUM MAGAZINE FOR THE POLYMERS VALUE CHAIN

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Innovation
When Materials Begin to Think

Technology
From Pack to Platform

BALANCING CONTINUITY WITH CHANGE

Nilesh Mazumdar, CEO of Sintex, on balancing legacy with change, staying close to the market, and building organisations that adapt without losing focus.

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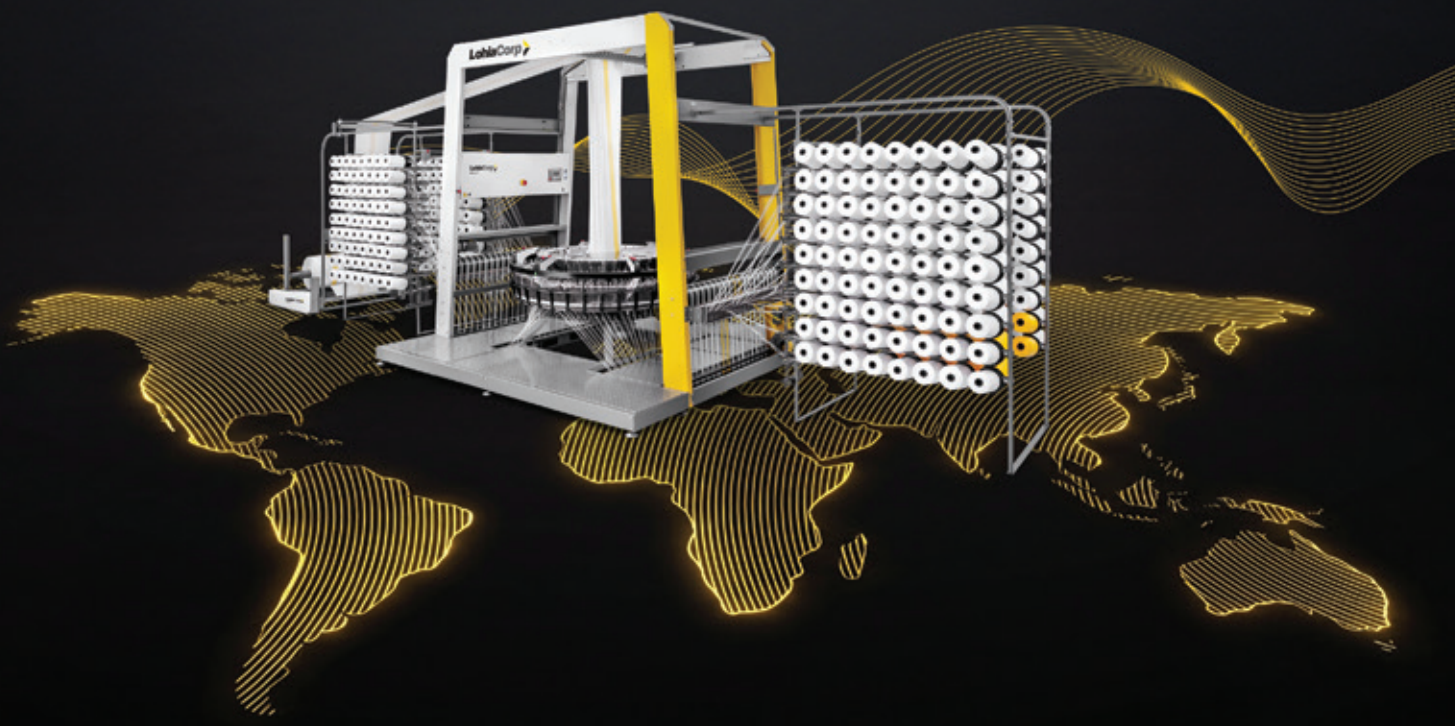

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EDITOR'S NOTE

ET NOW POLYMERS
#INDIA'S PREMIUM MAGAZINE FOR THE POLYMERS VALUE CHAIN
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WHEN MATERIALS BEGIN TO THINK

There is a quiet shift underway in the polymers industry. Not the kind that announces itself loudly, but one that slowly changes how we understand the very materials we work with.

For decades, polymers have been about performance. Strength, durability and cost efficiency defined the conversation. Get that balance right, and you had a competitive edge. But today, that definition is expanding.

This edition's cover story captures that transition through a conversation with Nilesh Mazumdar, CEO of Sintex. What stands out is a simple but powerful idea. Progress does not always come from dramatic change. It often comes from knowing what should stay the same while steadily building what comes next.

That balance between continuity and change feels particularly relevant right now.

Because even as the industry holds on to its fundamentals, expectations from materials are evolving rapidly. We are no longer asking polymers to just perform. We are beginning to expect them to respond.

This is where smart polymers enter the conversation.

Materials that can react to temperature, light or their environment are no longer theoretical. They are finding real applications across healthcare, automotive and even textiles. They can adapt, adjust and in some cases even enhance performance over time. That changes the role of materials in a very fundamental way.

They are no longer passive inputs. They are becoming active participants.

At the same time, the industry is navigating a more complex reality. Sustainability is no longer a side discussion. It is central to how companies think about growth. The pressure to create materials that are not only efficient but also responsible is stronger than ever.

Interestingly, this is not slowing innovation. If anything, it is reshaping it.

The focus is shifting towards materials that do more with less. That last longer. That align with a more conscious approach to manufacturing. Smart polymers, with their ability to improve efficiency and reduce waste, are part of this larger movement.

Beyond materials, the way companies operate is also changing. Supply chains are becoming more flexible. Technology is playing a bigger role in decision making. And yet, as the cover story reminds us, staying close to the market remains just as important.

Because in the end, industries do not transform overnight.

They evolve. Layer by layer, idea by idea.

The polymers industry is at one of those moments where the familiar and the new are coexisting. Where legacy still matters, but so does the ability to adapt. Where materials are not just being improved, but reimagined.

And perhaps that is what makes this phase so interesting.

The future is not just about stronger or lighter polymers.

It is about smarter ones.

Amit Shanbaug
Editor.

Photography: Vaibhav Nadgaonkar

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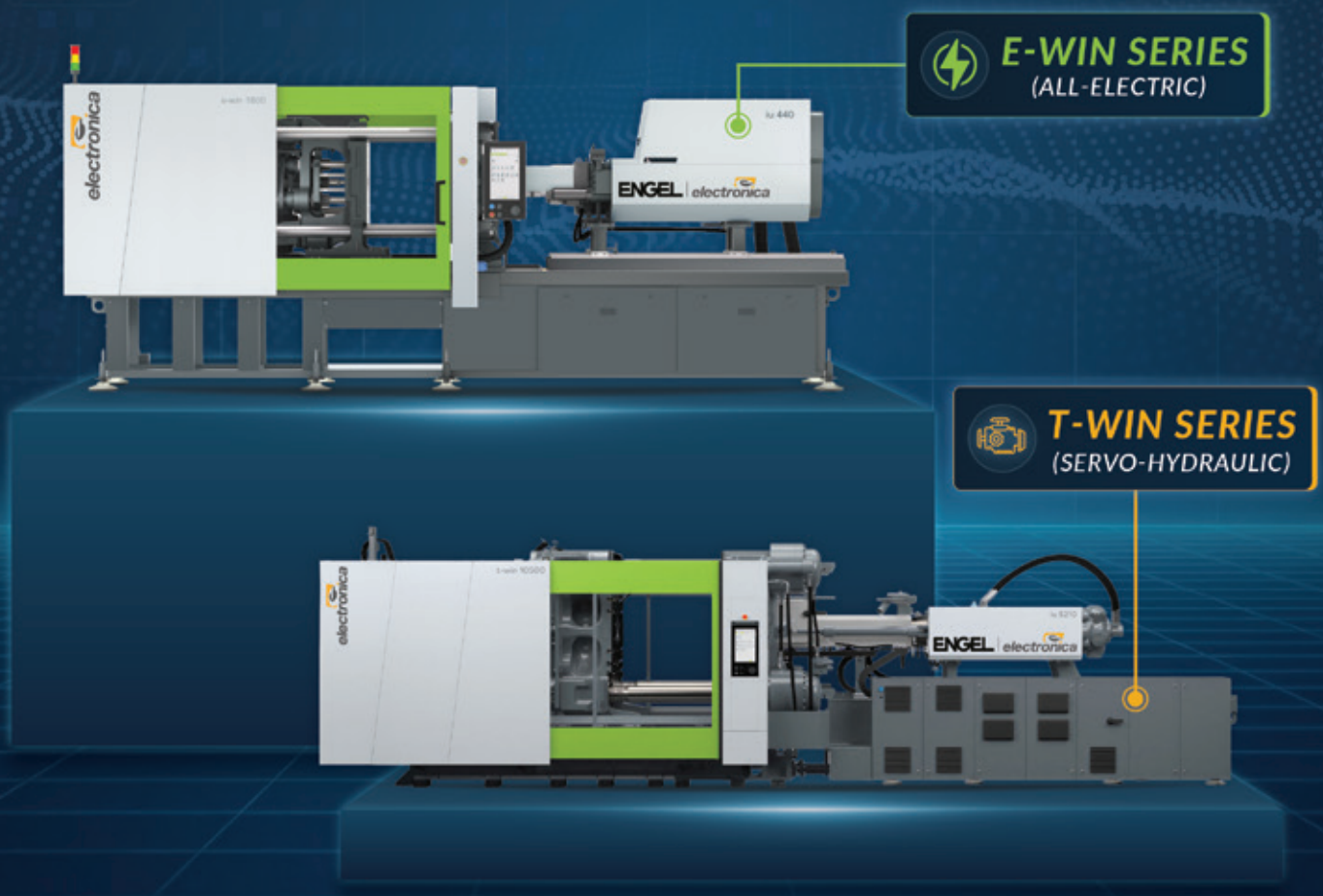

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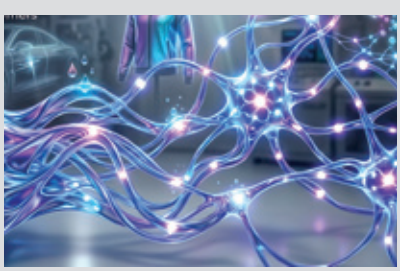

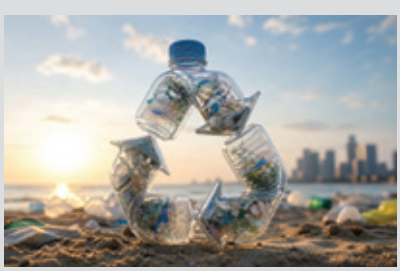

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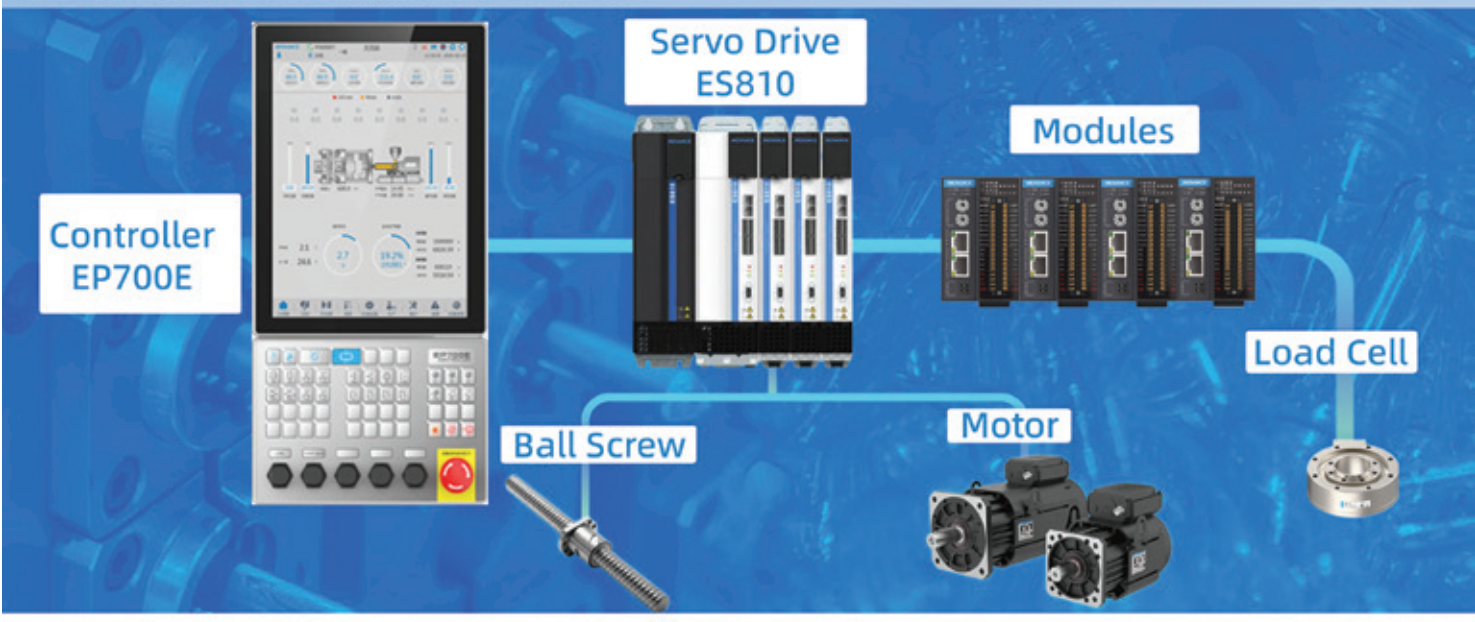

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SHAPING THE FUTURE OF PLASTICS MANUFACTURING

At Inovance, we believe that the integration of Industry 4.0, automation & robotics, advanced tooling, and skill development is a necessity to remain competitive in a rapidly evolving global market.

By Mr. Anil Kumar, Managing Director, Inovance India

Industry 4.0 is fundamentally reshaping how plastics are manufactured. The transition from conventional systems to smart, interconnected production environments is enabling real-time monitoring.

In plastics processing, whether injection moulding, extrusion, or blow moulding this means enhanced control over critical parameters such as pressure, temperature, and cycle time. The result is improved product consistency, reduced material wastage, and optimised operational efficiency. From our perspective, the real value of Industry 4.0 lies in its ability to turn data into actionable insights, empowering manufacturers to move from reactive to predictive operations.

Smart Automation & Precision

Automation is central to modern plastics manufacturing, and companies like Inovance Technology are driving this shift with integrated systems combining drives, motors, PLCs, and motion control for enhanced efficiency and reliability. Their advanced solutions, including high-performance servo technologies, support fast, precise operations. Alongside this, innovations in mould design—such as simulation-driven engineering and conformal cooling—enable faster cycles, improved quality, and seamless integration with intelligent control systems, powering Industry 4.0 manufacturing.

Empowering the Plastics Industry with PIMM Solutions

Anil Kumar, Managing Director, Inovance India

At Inovance, we have developed our **PIMM (Plastic Injection Molding Machines)** solutions specifically to address the unique challenges of plastic processing applications. Our PIMM portfolio is designed to deliver high-performance, energy-efficient, and precise control across a wide range of applications, including Injection moulding machines, Extrusion systems, Blow moulding machines and Auxiliary equipment.

By integrating advanced **ES680 Electro-hydraulic** and **IS580 Hydraulic** servo drives, **MEG20/23** series motors, ISMG servo motor for energy saving servo pump applications and control technologies, PIMM solutions enable manufacturers to achieve faster response times, improved accuracy, and optimised energy consumption. More importantly, these solutions are built with Industry 4.0 readiness in mind, allowing seamless integration with digital platforms for enhanced monitoring, diagnostics, and process optimisation.

FIMM Technology: Simplifying Machine Design

In addition to PIMM, our FIMM (Full Electric Injection Molding Machine) technology represents a significant advancement in machine architecture. It integrates key components such as the MEG series servo motor, HSP & HSL series ball screws, and EFYH series ring force transducers into a compact and highly efficient system. FIMM technology is widely adopted across industries, including electronics, optics, automotive components, medical devices, cosmetics, toys, packaging, powder molding, and silicone processing, where precision and repeatability are critical.

In conclusion, sustainable growth in plastics manufacturing relies on skilled talent alongside advanced automation. By combining Industry 4.0 technologies, continuous skill development, and innovative solutions, Inovance is enabling smarter, efficient, and future-ready manufacturing ecosystems for competitive advantage.

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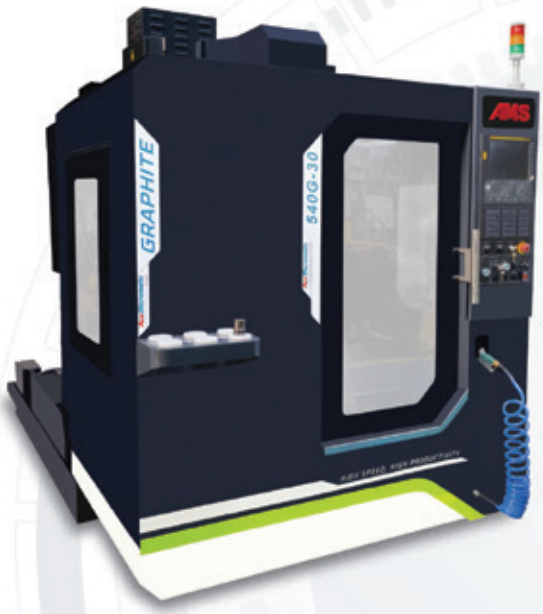

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(L to R) Mohan Ramachandran, Senior Director – Sales and Marketing, Milacron India Pvt. Ltd; Imtiaz Ahmed, Equipment Builder (OEM) Commercialization Manager-India, ExxonMobil

POWERING SMARTER MANUFACTURING THROUGH DATA

ExxonMobil and Milacron show how integrated data, machine intelligence, and condition monitoring are enabling more reliable, predictive, and efficient manufacturing operations.

By ET Now Polymers

PlastIndia 2026 brings together machine innovation, digital intelligence, and evolving manufacturing priorities. From your respective perspectives, how does this platform reflect the way equipment builders and solution providers are rethinking the future of injection molding?

Imtiaz Ahmed, ***Equipment Builder (OEM) Commercialization Manager-India, ExxonMobil:***
PlastIndia 2026 reflects how the plastics manufacturing ecosystem is evolving beyond standalone equipment or isolated technologies. We are seeing a clear shift toward integrated, data-driven manufacturing, where reliability, productivity, and operational visibility are becoming as important as machine capability itself. Platforms like this allow equipment builders and solution providers to collectively demonstrate how digital intelligence, when thoughtfully integrated, can support more informed decision-making and improved equipment performance across the value chain.

Mohan Ramachandran, ***Senior Director – Sales and Marketing, Milacron India Pvt. Ltd:***
From an OEM's perspective, PlastIndia is increasingly showcasing how machines fit into a broader, connected manufacturing environment. Customers today are looking for more than just output. They want insight, control, and confidence in their operations. This is why digital platforms such as M-Powered are becoming central to how machine performance, operating data, and system health are presented in a unified way, supporting smarter and more responsive manufacturing practices.

From a plastics manufacturing perspective, how are today's priorities around productivity, asset performance, and efficiency evolving, and what operational realities are shaping how manufacturers manage their equipment and processes?

Imtiaz Ahmed, ***Equipment Builder (OEM) Commercialization Manager-India, ExxonMobil:***
Plastics manufacturers today are pursuing higher overall equipment effectiveness by driving uptime, productivity, and energy efficiency-while keeping cost per component and quality variability firmly under control. There is a strong push to maximize asset availability, reduce defects, lower energy consumption per part, and move toward more sustainable, predictable operations.

As plants become more automated and data-driven, complexity has increased significantly. A key challenge is the lack of real-time visibility into critical operating and asset-health parameters. Much of the data used for performance and maintenance decisions is still manual, intermittent, or delayed-making it difficult to draw actionable insights or respond quickly when conditions start to

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deviate. Conventional monitoring approaches also limit reaction time, increase human intervention, and leave gaps between data points, which can expose operations to unplanned downtime, contamination risks, and efficiency losses.

To meet these challenges, manufacturers are increasingly looking for continuous, reliable insights that enable early warnings, faster decision-making, and proactive asset management - shifting from reactive maintenance to smarter, more predictive operations that protect equipment, improve utilization, and sustain productivity over the long term.

As an equipment builder, how is Milacron approaching digital integration through platforms like M-Powered, and why is it important for machine intelligence and condition monitoring data to coexist within a single operating environment for customers?

Mohan Ramachandran, ***Senior Director – Sales and Marketing, Milacron India Pvt. Ltd:***

Milacron's approach to digital integration is centered on making machine data more actionable for customers. Platforms like M-Powered bring together machine intelligence, predictive algorithms, operational alerts, and performance metrics such as uptime and OEE into a single view. This helps manufacturers move beyond basic monitoring to preventive and predictive maintenance, reducing unplanned outages, improving productivity, and simplifying how teams manage increasingly complex equipment environments.

However, machine intelligence alone is only part of the picture. To truly understand asset health and performance, operational data needs to be complemented by real-time condition monitoring of critical systems such as lubrication and hydraulics. This is where MobilTM IIoT Solutions play an important role. By combining Milacron's machine-level insights with Mobil's

> "Customers today are looking for more than just output. They want insight, control, and confidence in their operations.

lubrication and oil-condition intelligence, customers can correlate how machines are operating with how their systems are actually performing - enabling earlier warnings, faster decisions, and more reliable, efficient operations over the full lifecycle of the equipment.

As customer expectations evolve around uptime, consistency, and long-term machine performance, how is Milacron rethinking the way operating condition visibility is built into its machines and platforms?

Mohan Ramachandran, ***Senior Director – Sales and Marketing, Milacron India Pvt. Ltd:***

At Milacron, our focus has always been on delivering machines that perform reliably in real-world manufacturing environments, not just at the point of installation but throughout their operating life. As production requirements become more demanding, customers are looking for greater visibility into machine health parameters that influence performance, maintenance planning, and overall process stability.

Through platforms like M-Powered, we are working to bring relevant operating and condition-related insights into a single environment that customers already use to manage their machines. This approach allows machine data and critical condition indicators to be viewed together, helping customers make more informed decisions around maintenance and performance optimization. Machine learning modules, such as its AI-based LifeCycle module, help improve uptime and long-term machine performance.

As part of this ecosystem thinking, integrations such as Mobil's IIoT-based oil condition monitoring solutions add an important layer of insight around hydraulic system health, complementing machine-level intelligence and strengthening the overall value delivered to customers.

Oil condition data can often feel abstract to non-technical stakeholders. What kind of insights does Mobil's IoT solution generate, and why are parameters such as particle levels and moisture content so critical for maintaining injection molding machine performance?

Imtiaz Ahmed, ***Equipment Builder (OEM) Commercialization Manager-India, ExxonMobil:***

Mobil's IIoT solution translates oil condition into clear, actionable insights that are easier for different stakeholders to understand and act upon. The solution focuses on two key parameters: particle count, measured in line with ISO 4406 cleanliness standards, and relative humidity, which indicates moisture presence in the oil. These factors are critical because contamination and moisture are among the primary contributors to stress on hydraulic systems. By monitoring these parameters in real time, manufacturers can better understand the condition of the oil and its impact on machine performance, helping support more reliable operation and informed maintenance planning.

Milacron is unveiling several new developments here at Plastindia 2026. Can you walk us through what you're showcasing today

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and how these launches reflect the evolving needs of plastics manufacturers?

Mohan Ramachandran, ***Senior Director – Sales and Marketing, Milacron India Pvt. Ltd:***

At Plastindia 2026, Milacron is showcasing a set of new machine platforms across both injection molding and extrusion that reflect where customer requirements are headed. This includes a next-generation center-tonnage injection molding machine being demonstrated in live crate production, an all-electric injection molding machine focused on high-speed packaging applications such as yoghurt cups, and a newly introduced twin parallel extruder that expands our extrusion portfolio. Together, these launches highlight Milacron's focus on productivity, application-specific performance, and flexibility across different manufacturing environments.

Alongside the machines, Milacron is also presenting its M-Powered digital solutions, which provide operational visibility, alerts, and predictive insights linked directly to machine performance. As manufacturing becomes more data-driven, connecting machine intelligence with system-level condition insights becomes increasingly important. In this context, collaborations with partners like Mobil help extend visibility beyond machine operation alone, enabling customers to better understand how critical systems such as lubrication and hydraulics influence performance, uptime, and long-term reliability.

How does this integration change the way different stakeholders across the plastics manufacturing ecosystem experience performance, reliability, and outcomes?

Imtiaz Ahmed, ***Equipment Builder (OEM) Commercialization Manager-India, ExxonMobil:***

When digital oil condition monitoring is integrated into an OEM platform like M-Powered, it influences value creation across multiple layers of the ecosystem.

> We are seeing a clear shift toward integrated, data-driven manufacturing, where reliability, productivity, and operational visibility are becoming as important.

For equipment builders, it supports more holistic machine intelligence by complementing existing performance data with lubrication insights. This helps strengthen differentiation and enables more advanced analytics to be offered to customers.

For machine owners, access to real-time oil condition data alongside machine information supports predictive maintenance approaches, helping reduce unplanned downtime, improve productivity, and manage operating costs more effectively.

Ultimately, for end consumers, these improvements contribute to more consistent production, defect-free output, and more reliable supply chains. This approach builds on Mobil's long-standing collaboration with OEM's globally and reflects how digital capabilities are extending the role of lubrication beyond the molecule.

Looking ahead, as injection molding machines become more connected and intelligent, how do collaborations between equipment builders and solution providers redefine what customers should expect from next-generation manufacturing ecosystems?

Mohan Ramachandran, ***Senior Director – Sales and Marketing, Milacron India Pvt. Ltd:***

As injection molding systems evolve, customer expectations are shifting from standalone machines to integrated manufacturing platforms. From Milacron's perspective, collaboration plays a critical role in enabling this shift. By bringing together machine design, controls, and digital platforms such as M-Powered, customers gain a more unified view of machine health, process stability, and operational performance. Partnerships that align machine intelligence with complementary technologies allow us to build scalable, future-ready solutions, where insights are embedded into the machine environment rather than added as an afterthought. This helps customers move towards more connected operations while maintaining flexibility as their digital maturity grows.

Imtiaz Ahmed, ***Equipment Builder (OEM) Commercialization Manager-India, ExxonMobil:***

From a solution provider standpoint, these collaborations allow condition monitoring and lubrication intelligence to become part of the broader manufacturing ecosystem. When oil condition data and insights are integrated into an equipment builder's digital platform, it enables stakeholders across the value chain to make more informed decisions. Equipment builders benefit from deeper machine intelligence, machine owners gain earlier visibility into potential issues through real-time data, and end customers ultimately benefit from more consistent quality and reliable operations. Backed by Mobil's long-standing experience of working with equipment builders globally, this approach reflects how digital and IIoT-enabled lubrication solutions can support the evolving expectations of next-generation plastics manufacturing.

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Bharat Carbonates supplies tailored coated and uncoated calcium carbonate grades backed by strong quality controls and close technical collaboration with customers.

By Team ET Now Polymers

Bharat Carbonates manufactures two primary product families: coated calcium carbonate and uncoated calcium carbonate powder, serving industries such as paper, plastics, pharmaceuticals, rubber, paints and construction. Coated grades improve compatibility, dispersibility and performance in polymer and paint systems, while uncoated powders act as economical mineral fillers for PVC pipes, paper, and other industrial applications.

To ensure consistency across grades and batches, the company follows a rigorous quality programme. Raw limestone is inspected at intake for feedstock purity, while micronisation and classification systems control particle-size distribution, moisture and morphology. Whiteness and brightness are measured to meet optical requirements for paper and coatings, and chemical testing verifies purity and composition. Packaging and storage protocols maintain product stability during transport and handling.

Product Differentiation

Bharat Carbonates differentiates itself through investments in particle engineering and coating technologies. Precision micronisation and fine grinding produce narrow particle-size distributions and controlled morphology, enabling grades to be engineered for specific applications.

For coated grades, the company uses imported stearic acid and specialty coating chemistries that improve dispersibility, impart hydrophobic properties and enhance compatibility with polymer systems. Analytical testing and surface-modification techniques verify coating coverage and performance consistency.

Automation and continuous monitoring further maintain uniform quality while enabling faster customisation when required.

Application Advantages

The company's calcium carbonate grades are developed to deliver targeted benefits across industries.

In **plastics,** coated calcium carbonate improves filler dispersion, enhances mechanical properties, and supports cost-effective formulations in PVC profiles, cables and masterbatches.

In **paints and coatings,** surface-treated grades increase whiteness, opacity and dispersibility, helping achieve smoother finishes and improved adhesion.

For **rubber applications,** tailored particle-size distributions and coating chemistries reduce agglomeration while improving elasticity and compound strength.

In **adhesives and sealants,** coated powders support bonding performance and formulation stability through uniform particle distribution. Paper applications benefit from high-purity grades that improve brightness, opacity and printability.

R&D and Customer Collaboration

Research and development play a central role in refining product performance and manufacturing efficiency. Bharat Carbonates invests in analytical laboratories and surface-modification research to optimise coating chemistry and evaluate parameters such as coating coverage and particle interaction with polymers.

The company also works closely with customers through site visits, diagnostics, and pilot-scale trials to address production challenges and refine grades before large-scale adoption. Analytical testing and field validation help ensure that laboratory results translate effectively into industrial performance.

Growth and Sustainability

Bharat Carbonates is pursuing measured growth alongside sustainability initiatives. In 2025, the company expanded production capacity from **84,000 MT per year to 150,000 MT per year** by adding new production lines.

Renewable energy investments, including a **2.1 MW windmill and a 1.35 MW solar facility,** are helping reduce carbon intensity and operational emissions. Combined with process optimisation and waste-reduction efforts, these initiatives support responsible industrial expansion as the company looks to grow its presence across the **Asia-Pacific region.**

In conclusion, Bharat Carbonates continues to strengthen its position as a reliable supplier of high-quality calcium carbonate solutions through a combination of advanced particle engineering and rigorous quality control. With expanding production capacity and growing investments in renewable energy, the company is well positioned to support evolving industrial demands while advancing sustainable growth across regional markets.

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FROM PACK TO PLATFORM

Flexible electronics are turning packaging into a connected interface, enabling real time tracking, authentication and consumer interaction across industries

By Team ET Now Polymers

There was a time when packaging had a simple role. Protect the product, extend shelf life, and communicate brand identity. Today, that role is expanding in ways that would have seemed improbable just a decade ago.

Packaging is beginning to think.

At the core of this shift is the convergence of flexible electronics and advanced polymer-based packaging. Technologies such as printed circuits, RFID tags, NFC chips and embedded sensors are now being integrated directly into packaging formats, transforming them from passive containers into interactive, data driven systems.

The scale of this transformation is significant.

The global flexible electronics market alone is estimated at USD **44 billion in 2025 and is projected to reach $99 billion by 2035,** growing at a steady pace of 8.5 percent. Alongside this, the printed electronics market is expected to expand from $19.46 billion in 2025 to $39.85 billion by 2030, at a **CAGR of 15.4 percent.** These technologies form the backbone of what is now being called smart or connected packaging.

And the packaging industry itself is keeping pace. The global smart packaging market is projected to reach $51.1 billion by 2034, driven by increasing demand for safety, traceability and consumer engagement. Within this, RFID enabled packaging is emerging as a key segment, expected to grow from $5.2 billion in 2025 to $15.6 billion by 2035, reflecting a CAGR of 11.9 percent.

These numbers point to a clear direction. Packaging is no longer just a physical layer. It is becoming a digital touchpoint.

What is enabling this shift is the evolution of flexible and printed electronics. Unlike traditional rigid components, these systems can be printed using conductive inks on flexible substrates such as plastic films, paper or even textiles. This allows circuits, antennas and sensors to be embedded seamlessly into packaging formats without adding bulk or compromising form.

The implications are far reaching.

In supply chains, smart packaging is enabling real time visibility. RFID tags and printed sensors allow companies to track products across their journey, monitor temperature and humidity, and ensure product integrity. This is particularly critical in industries such as food and pharmaceuticals, where even minor deviations can lead to spoilage or compliance issues. Flexible electronic labels are increasingly replacing traditional barcodes, offering continuous monitoring rather than static identification.

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In parallel, authentication is becoming a major driver. Counterfeiting remains a significant challenge across sectors ranging from pharmaceuticals to luxury goods. Smart packaging, equipped with NFC or RFID technologies, allows products to be verified instantly, often through a simple smartphone interaction. This not only protects brands but also builds consumer trust.

But perhaps the most visible transformation is happening at the consumer interface.

Packaging is evolving into a communication channel. A simple tap or scan can now unlock product information, origin details, usage instructions or even immersive brand experiences. For consumers, this adds a layer of transparency and engagement. For brands, it creates a direct, measurable connection with the end user.

This is especially relevant in FMCG, where differentiation is increasingly difficult to achieve through product alone. Smart packaging allows brands to extend their presence beyond the shelf, turning packaging into an interactive platform rather than a static surface.

The role of polymers in this transformation cannot be overstated.

Flexible packaging materials provide the ideal substrate for integrating electronic components. Their lightweight, adaptable nature allows them to accommodate printed circuits and sensors without compromising functionality. Advances in material science, including conductive inks and stretchable substrates, are further enhancing the performance and reliability of these systems.

At the same time, manufacturing technologies are evolving to support scale. Techniques such as roll-to-roll printing enable mass production of flexible electronic components at lower cost, making smart packaging increasingly viable for large volume applications .

However, this transition is not without its challenges.

> Smart packaging is redefining the role of packaging right from protection to connection. Powered by flexible polymers and embedded electronics, it enables authentication, transparency, and consumer engagement, while transforming packs into intelligent, connected platforms across the value chain.

Cost remains a key barrier. Integrating electronics into packaging adds complexity to production processes, and achieving the right balance between functionality and affordability is still a work in progress. There is also a learning curve for both manufacturers and consumers, particularly when it comes to adopting and interacting with new technologies.

Sustainability presents another layer of complexity. As packaging becomes more sophisticated, ensuring that it remains recyclable or environmentally responsible becomes more difficult. The industry is actively exploring solutions, including biodegradable substrates and low impact electronic components, but this remains an evolving area.

Despite these challenges, the direction is clear.

The integration of flexible electronics into packaging is not a niche trend. It is part of a broader shift toward connected intelligent systems. As the Internet of Things expands, the ability to embed intelligence into everyday objects becomes increasingly valuable.

Packaging, by its very nature, sits at the intersection of product, supply chain and consumer. That makes it an ideal platform for this transformation.

What we are witnessing is the redefinition of packaging itself.

No longer just a protective layer, it is becoming a sensor, a communicator and a data node. It can track, verify, inform and engage. It can connect physical products to digital ecosystems in real time.

And as adoption accelerates, this convergence of polymers and electronics is likely to reshape not just packaging, but the entire value chain around it.

Because the future of packaging will not be defined by how well it contains a product.

It will be defined by how intelligently it connects it.

6th EDITION

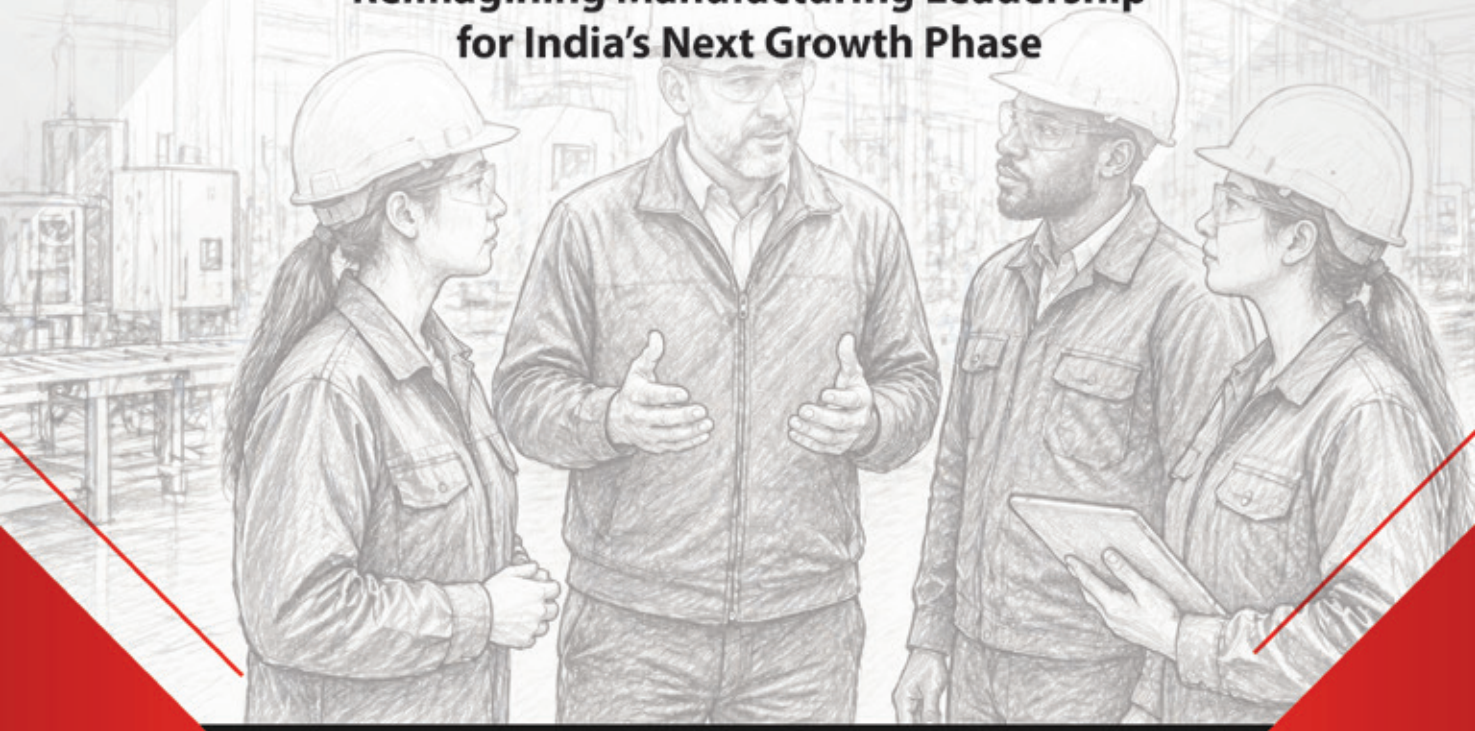
ET NOW MACHINIST

GLOBAL MANUFACTURING SUMMIT

Shaping Leadership & Transformation

Theme

Reimagining Manufacturing Leadership for India's Next Growth Phase



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ENGINEERING LIGHTWEIGHT MATERIALS

As industries shift toward lightweight engineering materials, advanced tooling and machining strategies are becoming essential to balance performance, precision, and productivity in complex manufacturing environments.

By Team ET Now Polymers

In today's evolving manufacturing industry, the growing emphasis on efficiency and performance has accelerated the adoption of lightweight engineering materials across various sectors. Materials like aluminium alloys, titanium, and advanced composites are increasingly preferred due to their superior strength-to-weight ratios, corrosion resistance, and thermal stability. However, their inherent properties also introduce a unique set of machining challenges that demand equally advanced solutions.

Lightweight materials often exhibit characteristics such as high ductility, toughness, or thermal conductivity, all of which can complicate machining processes. Titanium, for instance, is known for its toughness and tendency to cause rapid tool wear, while aluminium's high thermal conductivity can result in excessive heat concentration at the cutting interface. Composite materials further intensify these challenges due to their abrasive reinforcements, increasing the risk of tool degradation and issues such as delamination. Even polymer-based lightweight structures, designed to reduce weight, often lack stiffness and require reinforcements that make machining more complex.

To address these challenges, ISCAR has developed a comprehensive range of tooling solutions tailored for high-performance machining of lightweight materials. By focusing on tool geometry, material composition, and coating technologies, the company enhances both productivity and precision. Specialized tool geometries are engineered to reduce cutting forces and improve chip evacuation, ensuring smoother machining even in demanding applications such as titanium milling. Advanced coatings like TiAlN and diamond-like carbon significantly improve tool hardness and resistance to abrasion, extending tool life under high-temperature and high-stress conditions.

Figure 1

Figure 2

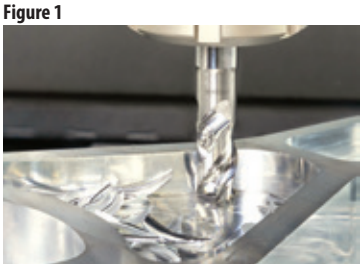

Figure 3

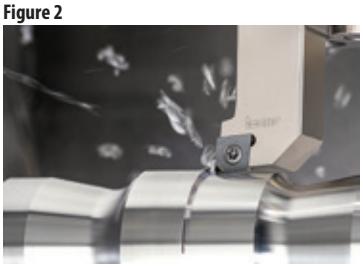

Figure 4

In milling applications, ISCAR's high-performance cutters are designed to operate efficiently at high speeds while minimizing vibration, a critical factor when machining thin-walled or delicate components. Similarly, optimized inserts for turning operations enable better chip control and reduced heat generation, contributing to improved surface finish and operational efficiency. These tooling advancements are further supported by modern machining techniques such as high-speed machining, minimum quantity lubrication, and adaptive machining strategies, all of which help maintain consistent cutting conditions and reduce cycle times.

The aerospace and space industries highlight the importance of such innovations. These sectors rely heavily on lightweight materials to improve fuel efficiency, performance, and sustainability while maintaining strict requirements for precision and reliability. Machining components for these applications demands exceptional accuracy and durability, as even minor deviations can impact overall performance.

As manufacturing continues to evolve, the ability to effectively machine lightweight materials will remain a critical differentiator. Through continuous innovation in tooling and process optimization, ISCAR enables industries to overcome these challenges, ensuring high-quality outcomes while maintaining efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

November
2026

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THE TIMES GROUP

ET NOW POLYMERS 10th EDITION Global Conference on Plastics in Automotive

Theme:

LOCAL INNOVATION, GLOBAL IMPACT, SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY

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Smart polymers are reshaping manufacturing by bringing intelligence into materials themselves, unlocking new possibilities across industries

There was a time when innovation in polymers was largely about strength, durability or cost efficiency. Today, that definition is expanding in a far more interesting direction. Materials are no longer passive. They are beginning to respond, adapt and even behave based on their environment.

Welcome to the world of smart polymers.

At its simplest, smart polymers are materials that react to external stimuli such as temperature, light, pH or humidity in a predictable way. That responsiveness is what makes them fundamentally different from traditional polymers. They are not just manufactured. They are engineered to interact.

And the market is responding accordingly.

According to recent estimates, the global smart polymers market was valued at $3.99 billion in 2025 and is expected to grow to $4.60 billion in 2026, eventually reaching **USD 13.40 billion by 2034.** That translates into a **CAGR of 13.2 percent** over the forecast period. For an industry that has historically evolved in incremental steps, this kind of growth signals a deeper shift underway.

What is driving this acceleration is not one sector, but a convergence of multiple high impact applications.

Healthcare and biotechnology are at the forefront. Smart polymers are increasingly being used in drug delivery systems, medical devices and even cell therapy, where their ability to respond to specific biological conditions enables more targeted and efficient treatment. In a world that is moving toward precision medicine, this capability is becoming critical.

At the same time, industries like automotive and electronics are discovering new value in these materials. Shape memory polymers are being explored for applications ranging from lightweight vehicle components to self-healing systems that can improve durability and performance. These materials not only enhance functionality but also contribute to weight reduction, which in turn improves fuel efficiency.

Textiles, too, are undergoing a quiet transformation. Smart polymers are enabling fabrics that can change properties based on environmental conditions, offering features such as temperature sensitivity, moisture response and even colour change. This is opening up entirely new categories in wearable technology and functional textiles.

What ties all of these applications together is a single idea. Intelligence is no longer confined to machines or software. It is being embedded directly into materials.

This is where the conversation intersects with the broader evolution of manufacturing.

As factories become more digital and connected, the role of materials is also changing. Smart

manufacturing is not just about automating processes. It is about creating systems where materials, machines and data work together seamlessly. Smart polymers fit naturally into this ecosystem because they bring responsiveness at the material level.

In many ways, they represent the next layer of manufacturing evolution.

But like any emerging technology, this space comes with its own set of challenges.

Environmental concerns remain a critical issue. As the use of polymer-based materials expands, scrutiny around their lifecycle is intensifying. The production and disposal of certain polymers can contribute to emissions and waste, and governments across regions are tightening regulations around sustainability. This is pushing companies to rethink how these materials are designed, produced and recycled.

At the same time, this pressure is reshaping innovation itself. Sustainability is no longer an afterthought. It is becoming a core design principle. Smart polymers are now being developed to reduce material usage, extend product life and improve recyclability. Their ability to enable lightweighting while maintaining performance aligns closely with global sustainability goals.

This creates a dual challenge. Companies need to innovate, but they also need to do so responsibly.

> Smart polymers are redefining materials science, shifting polymers from passive to responsive systems. Rapid growth is driven by healthcare, manufacturing and electronics, while sustainability challenges shape the next phase globally.

Interestingly, regulation in this space is beginning to act less like a constraint and more like a catalyst. The push toward greener alternatives is accelerating research into advanced materials that combine functionality with environmental efficiency.

Regionally, North America currently leads the smart polymers market, accounting for over 43 percent share in 2025, driven by strong demand from electronics and advanced manufacturing sectors. However, Asia Pacific is emerging as a key growth engine, supported by rapid industrialisation and expanding end use industries in countries like India and China.

This has important implications for India.

As the country positions itself as a global manufacturing hub, the adoption of advanced materials like smart polymers could play a significant role. Industries such as automotive, healthcare, electronics and packaging are already seeing increased demand for high performance materials. Integrating smart polymers into these sectors could enhance competitiveness, improve product quality and open up new innovation pathways.

But perhaps the most important shift is not just technological. It is conceptual.

Manufacturing has traditionally focused on controlling outcomes, standardising processes and eliminating variability. Smart polymers introduce a different approach. They are designed to adapt, to respond and in some cases to self correct.

This changes the role of materials within manufacturing systems.

Instead of being passive inputs, materials become active contributors to performance. They can sense, react and even enhance functionality over time. In combination with digital technologies such as AI and IoT, this creates a new kind of production environment where intelligence is distributed not just in machines, but in the materials themselves.

That is a profound shift.

Because the future of manufacturing will not be defined only by how efficiently we produce. It will be defined by how intelligently materials and systems work together.

Smart polymers are an early but important step in that direction.

And as adoption accelerates, they are likely to move from being an advanced material category to becoming a foundational element of next generation manufacturing.

Stepping into a legacy organisation, Nilesh Mazumdar emphasises continuity alongside change. At Sintex, he leads with simplicity, trust, and close market engagement, building entrepreneurial ownership across teams, and steering sustainable, agile transformation fit for India's diverse, evolving markets through clarity, discipline, and long-term purpose.

By Amit Shanbaug

Stepping into a legacy organisation is rarely straightforward. There is history to respect, expectations to meet, and at the same time, a future to prepare for. When Nilesh Mazumdar took charge at Sintex, the task was not about turning things around overnight. It was about understanding what already worked and deciding how far to push change.

"Sintex has been a well-recognised brand for over five decades, and that kind of trust gets built only over a long period of consistent delivery," he says. That statement, in many ways, sets the tone for how he approaches leadership. The starting point is not disruption, but clarity on what should not change.

For Mazumdar, the real challenge lies in striking a balance. Markets evolve, customer expectations shift, and no organisation can afford to remain static. But change, he believes, works best when it does not feel forced. "The effort should be to make the business more relevant for the future while retaining the core identity that people associate with the brand."

This idea of continuity alongside change is something he returns to often. Transformation, in his view, is rarely a single event. It is a gradual process. "If people can see continuity along with change, the organisation adapts much more positively," he explains. It is as much about perception as it is about strategy.

One of the more striking aspects of Mazumdar's leadership philosophy is how strongly he leans towards simplicity. Ask him about lessons that have stayed constant, and the answer is immediate. "Keep life simple."

It may sound obvious, but in large organisations, simplicity is often the first thing that gets lost. Layers of communication, multiple priorities, and constant firefighting can dilute focus. Mazumdar believes clarity cuts through that noise. "Simple thinking and clear communication help teams stay focused and execute more effectively."

This clarity becomes even more critical when organisations are trying to grow or transform. According to him, the difference between steady growth and real transformation often starts at the top. Leaders who are willing to experiment, who are not overly

BALANCING CONTINUITY WITH CHANGE

Nilesh Mazumdar, CEO of Sintex, on balancing legacy with change, staying close to the market, and building organisations that adapt without losing focus.

attached to past success, tend to create more dynamic organisations.

"Such leaders don't get too comfortable with what has worked in the past," he says. "They have the hunger to experiment, and they keep raising the bar." That mindset, combined with agility, becomes a powerful driver. The speed at which companies respond to change, and how effectively they adapt, often determines how far they can go.

But Mazumdar is quick to point out that leadership intent alone is not enough. For transformation to sustain, it has to move beyond the top layer. It needs to become part of the culture. "When brands build entrepreneurial capability across levels, where people take ownership and think beyond their immediate roles, transformation becomes more sustained."

That sense of ownership is closely linked to how connected leaders remain to the market. In sectors like polymers, where the end user is not always visible, it is easy to rely heavily on data and reports. Mazumdar does not dismiss these tools, but he does not rely on them entirely either.

"Nothing can replace physical market visits when it comes to discovering the pulse of the markets," he says. There is a level of nuance that numbers alone cannot capture. Conversations with distributors, dealers, contractors, and even end users often reveal insights that structured reports miss.

> "Nilesh Mazumdar's leadership at Sintex focuses on balancing legacy with evolution, prioritising simplicity, trust, and market connection. His approach champions gradual transformation, entrepreneurial culture, and adaptive decision-making to keep a storied brand future-ready and relevant.

For him, staying connected is not a one-time exercise. It is an ongoing process. "I like to meet people, talk to them and learn what drives their interests." This constant engagement helps keep his understanding grounded and current, even in a category that can feel one step removed from the consumer.

Inside the organisation, building the right mindset comes down to a simple but often overlooked factor. Trust. "It all starts with the confidence you place in your people," he says. When individuals are given the space to think and the authority to act, ownership tends to follow naturally.

However, trust without direction can lead to confusion. That is where clarity of purpose becomes important. People need to understand what they are working towards and why it matters. When that alignment exists, initiative does not have to be forced. It becomes part of how teams operate.

Decision making, too, reflects this balance between structure and instinct. Mazumdar does not believe in a fixed formula. "There is no one size fits all when it comes to decision making," he says. Different situations demand different approaches.

At a strategic level, data and analytics often play a significant role. But in operational scenarios, speed can be just as important. Over time, experience begins to shape how these choices are made. "The art lies in knowing which lever to prioritise in a given situation."

The same balance is visible in how he looks at discipline and innovation. Organisations often struggle to encourage bold thinking without losing control over processes. Mazumdar does not see these as conflicting priorities.

He uses a simple analogy to explain this. Running an organisation, he says, is like managing a Formula One race. There are multiple moving

parts, and timing becomes critical. "When to hit the gas, when to hit brakes are skills that only experience can teach you."

Innovation, in this context, is not about taking reckless risks. It is about making calculated bets. Evaluating potential outcomes, thinking long term, and ensuring that teams feel confident enough to experiment. "I ensure that my decisions spark confidence in my people to try out new things," he says, adding that due diligence and risk management remain essential.

Sustainability is another area where expectations have changed significantly. What was once seen as an additional responsibility is now central to how businesses operate. Mazumdar acknowledges this shift, noting that companies today are expected to create value for a broader set of stakeholders.

"The polymer industry is no exception to this trend," he says. There is increasing focus on developing solutions that are both efficient and environmentally responsible. Technology and awareness have played a role in pushing these conversations forward.

He also points to examples within the broader ecosystem where sustainability has been integrated into operations in a meaningful way. The idea is not just to meet regulatory requirements, but to embed responsibility into everyday business practices.

Recent global disruptions have further changed how companies think about resilience. Events such as the pandemic and geopolitical tensions have exposed the risks of rigid supply chains. As a result, there is a growing emphasis on flexibility.

"Diversification and decentralised operations are the key transitions," Mazumdar observes. Companies are looking to reduce dependence on single sources, improve visibility on inventory, and respond more effectively to disruptions. The challenge, however, lies in doing all this while managing costs.

Looking ahead, he believes that local understanding will be a defining factor for success. India is not a uniform market, and strategies need to reflect that diversity. "What works in one segment doesn't always translate to another," he says.

At the same time, technology is becoming increasingly central to operations. Tools such as artificial intelligence and digitisation are no longer optional. Companies that are able to use them in a practical way are likely to keep pace with change more effectively.

Mazumdar's own journey has been shaped by his time at organisations like Asian Paints and Pidilite Industries. These experiences provided early exposure to structured thinking and market driven strategies, while also encouraging an entrepreneurial mindset.

Outside of work, he turns to long distance running to stay grounded. It is an activity that demands patience and consistency. "You don't look for quick outcomes, you get used to pacing yourself," he says. The parallels with leadership are not hard to see.

It also offers opportunities to interact with younger generations, whose perspectives often differ. These conversations, he notes, provide useful insights into how expectations are evolving.

In the end, Mazumdar's approach does not rely on grand statements or sweeping changes. It is built on a few consistent ideas. Stay simple. Stay connected. Stay adaptable. For a legacy brand like Sintex, that may well be the most practical way to move forward.

* T & C apply

'उद्योग उत्सव'
"THE FESTIVAL OF MANUFACTURING"™

Co-powered By

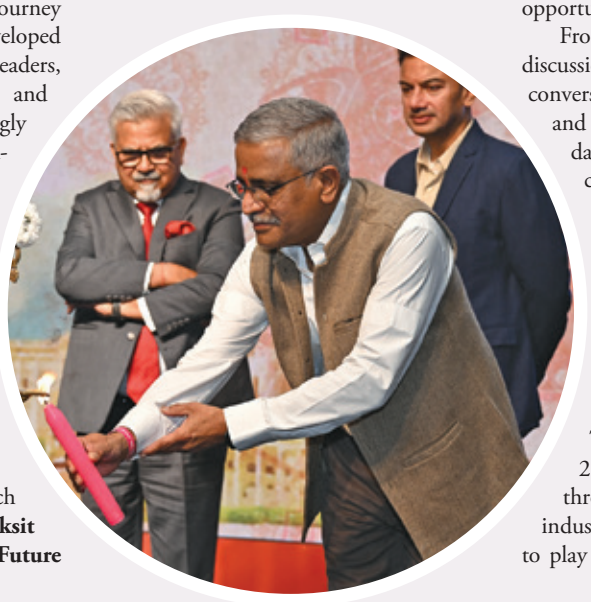
Ace Micromatic® Group

INDUSTRY LEADERS UNITE TO SHAPE INDIA'S MANUFACTURING FUTURE

At the 4th Edition of the Festival of Manufacturing, Industry leaders, policymakers and innovators converge in Chennai to discuss leadership, collaboration, MSMEs and ecosystem building for Viksit Bharat 2047.

India's manufacturing ecosystem is at a defining moment. As the country accelerates its journey toward becoming a developed nation by 2047, industry leaders, policymakers, innovators, and entrepreneurs are increasingly focusing on collaboration, capability building, and global competitiveness.

Against this backdrop, the fourth edition of the **Festival of Manufacturing 2026,** organised by ET Now Machinist and the Times Group, brought together some of the most influential voices in the sector at Feathers Hotel in Chennai on March 6. The event, themed **"Viksit Bharat 2047: Building the Future Through Manufacturing,"** served as a platform to celebrate the achievements of the industry while also discussing the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.



From strategic leadership discussions and collaborative growth conversations to insights on MSMEs and ecosystem development, the day-long festival showcased the collective ambition of Indian manufacturing to move from scale to leadership on the global stage.

Partners powering the Festival of Manufacturing

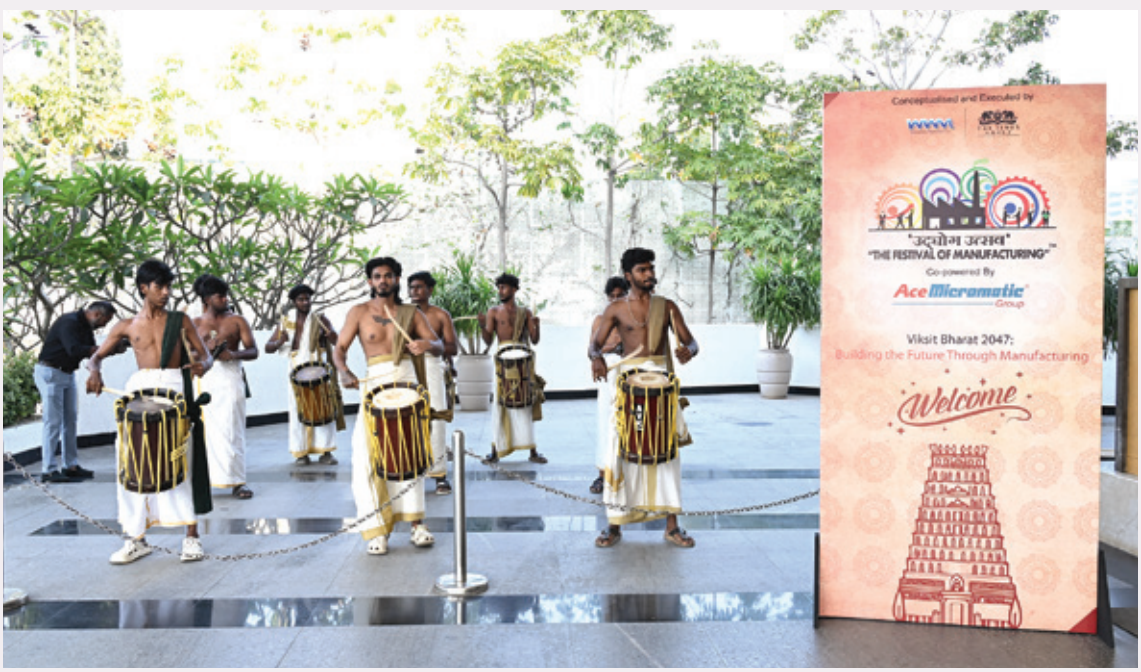
The Festival of Manufacturing 2026 was made possible through the strong support of industry partners who continue to play a vital role in strengthening

India's industrial ecosystem. The event was **co-powered by Ace Micromatic Group,** while **igus India** joined as the **Motion Plastics Partner. Pro-Arc Welding & Cutting Systems** and **Volvo** supported the event as **Gold Partners,** highlighting their continued commitment to advancing manufacturing technologies and capabilities in India. The event was further strengthened by **Zeiss India as the Metrology Partner** and **Marposs as the Quality Partner,** reflecting the growing importance of precision, measurement, and quality assurance in modern manufacturing.

Supporting partners including **Kennametal, Timken, KSH Infra, and Sairam Institutions** contributed to the event's success, alongside **TERADYNE Robotics** as the **Robotics Partner,** reinforcing the role of automation and robotics in the future of industry. The festival also received valuable support from **association partners IACC, AIEMA,** and **JITO Chennai,** while **ET Now Machinist** and **ET Now Polymers** served as **media partners** and **ET NOW** joined as the **television partner. Bennett University** supported the initiative as the **education partner,** underlining the importance of academia-industry collaboration in preparing the next generation of manufacturing professionals.

Setting the tone for a transformative journey

The fourth edition of the Festival of Manufacturing opened on an inspiring note, bringing together industry leaders, policymakers, and innovators to discuss the future of India's manufacturing ecosystem. The official inauguration was marked by the ceremonial lighting of the lamp by industry leaders including **T K Ramesh, Managing Director, Ace Designers Limited; Kamal Bali, President and Managing Director, Volvo Group India; Dr Kanakasabapathi Subramanian, Senior Vice President, Ashok Leyland; Ajesh Saklecha, Director, Ozone Motors; and Bipul Chandra, Managing Director, Ducati India Pvt Ltd.**



The traditional ceremony symbolised the collective commitment of industry stakeholders to strengthen India's industrial foundation and accelerate innovation-driven growth.

Manufacturing, remains the backbone of India's development story, driving job creation, innovation, and technological advancement.

Celebrating the people behind manufacturing

Delivering the opening remarks, **Amit Shanbaug, Editor – ET Now Machinist** and **ET Now Polymers,** reflected on the inspiration behind the Festival of Manufacturing platform.

He noted that while manufacturing has powered India's economic growth for decades, the stories of the people behind the machines often remain untold. Over the past year, the ET Now Machinist team had visited factories across the country, witnessing celebrations on shop floors during festivals such as Diwali, Holi, and Women's Day.

These experiences reinforced a powerful insight: manufacturing is not just about machines and output, it is about people, passion, and purpose. The festival, therefore, was conceptualised as a platform to recognise the individuals, plants, and organisations that continue to drive India's manufacturing transformation.

The theme **"Viksit Bharat 2047: Building the Future Through Manufacturing"** reflects the growing consensus that manufacturing will play a central role in India's journey toward becoming a developed economy.

Leadership and strategic vision take centre stage

The first major discussion of the day focused on **Leadership and Strategic Vision for India's Manufacturing Growth,** bringing together leaders who are actively shaping the industry's future.

Moderated by **Avinash Gupta, Managing Director and CEO – India, Dun & Bradstreet,** the panel featured an impressive lineup of industry leaders including:

- Bipul Chandra, Managing Director, Ducati India

- Vijaykrishnan Venkatesan, Managing Director, Kennametal India
- T K Ramesh, Managing Director, Ace Designers Limited
- Shailesh Hazela, CEO and Managing Director, Stellantis
- Kamal Bali, President and Managing Director, Volvo Group India
- Dr Kanakasabapathi Subramanian, Senior Vice President, Ashok Leyland
- Sunil Koparkar, Managing Director, IAC Group

The discussion centred on the evolution of India's manufacturing competitiveness. Panellists emphasised that the country is gradually moving beyond cost advantages to focus on capability-driven growth.

Industry leaders also spoke about the changing role of CEOs, who are increasingly required to act as ecosystem orchestrators bringing together suppliers, partners, technology providers, and talent to build resilient and globally competitive manufacturing networks.

Technology adoption, sustainability integration, and the development of skilled talent were highlighted as critical pillars for long-term growth.

Collaboration as the new growth engine

The second panel discussion brought together leaders who have successfully leveraged collaboration to scale capabilities and unlock new market opportunities. Titled **"Collaborative Growth: Partnerships, Capabilities, and Market Expansion,"** the session explored how strategic partnerships can act as catalysts for innovation and growth across industries.

Moderated by **Ajesh Saklecha, Director, Ozone Motors,** the panel featured Thej Kumar, Vice President – Operations, Toyoda Gosei South India Pvt Ltd; Ajitkumar Nair, Managing Director, Pro-Arc Welding & Cutting Systems; Shilpashree Muniswamappa, Director – ESG & Communications, Colgate-Palmolive (India) Ltd; Ramanathan V, President – Automotive Business Head, Lucas TVS; Cosimo Cereda, Managing Director, Marposs India Pvt Ltd; Sarvadnya Kulkarni, CEO, General Instruments Consortium; Purushothaman M, CEO, Indo Tech Transformers Limited; and Balbir Dhiman, COO, CG Power & Industrial Solutions.

The panel highlighted how collaboration across supply chains, technology providers, and manufacturing partners is increasingly enabling organisations to build stronger capabilities, co-create solutions, and enter new markets with greater agility.

MSMEs: the backbone of India's manufacturing ambition

The third panel turned the spotlight on **micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)**—widely recognised as the backbone of India's industrial ecosystem. The discussion focused on how MSMEs can strengthen their capabilities, integrate into global supply chains, and scale competitively.

Moderated by P Kaniappan, Head – MSME Vertical, Indian Foundation for Quality Management, the panel featured

Kajinder Srivastava, Co-founder & Director, Danphe Pvt Ltd; Vaibhav Jha, Deputy CEO, Ester Industries Limited; Venkatesh Mudragalla, Co-founder & COO, Jeh Aerospace; V Rajamohan, Operations Head – Blade Manufacturing, Envision Energy India; Arathi K Parigi, Managing Director, Neuton Auto Pvt Ltd; Sougandh K M, Business Director – South Asia, Universal Robots & Mobile Industrial Robots; Sravan Apanna, Chief Executive, iGo Mobility; and Arun Rathod, Chief Transformation Officer, Flosil Group of Companies.

The session explored how MSMEs can leverage digital technologies, precision manufacturing capabilities, and strategic partnerships with OEMs to compete globally while strengthening India's industrial supply chains.

Lessons from the Mumbai Dabbawallas

One of the most engaging segments of the event was a case study presented by **Dr Pawan Agrawal,** an internationally recognised TEDx speaker and management thinker.

Dr Agrawal explored the operational excellence of the **Mumbai Dabbawalla network,** a logistics system that has been delivering home-cooked meals across the city for over a century with remarkable accuracy.

Despite operating without sophisticated technology, the Dabbawalla system demonstrates the power of disciplined processes, human coordination, and simple yet effective coding systems.

Dr Agrawal drew parallels between the Dabbawalla model and modern manufacturing supply chains, emphasising that clarity, accountability, and teamwork remain fundamental to operational success.

Building stronger manufacturing ecosystems

The final panel of the day focused on the broader ecosystem that supports manufacturing growth, including policy frameworks, standards, and skill development initiatives. Titled **"Ecosystem Strengthening: Policy, Standards and Skill Development,"** the discussion examined how public–private collaboration can accelerate India's journey toward becoming a global manufacturing powerhouse.

Moderated by **Sangharakshaka V P, CEO, Aerospace and Aviation Sector Skill Council,** the panel featured **Savitha Jagadeesan, Chairperson, CII Indian Women Network – Tamil Nadu; Rajesh Chandan, Chairman, Latin American & Caribbean Trade Council; P Kasivishwanathan, Managing Director, TN AutoSkills; Mahesh V, Executive Director – Manufacturing Operations, NCR Atleos; Pragadhish C, Director – Ecosystem, TN Head; Wadhwani Foundation and Ankit Das, Associate Director, ANJ Group.**

The panel emphasised the importance of forward-looking policies, globally aligned standards, and a skilled workforce in enabling India's manufacturing sector to scale sustainably and compete internationally.

Recognising the plants shaping the future

A key highlight of the festival was the **Promising Plants of the Future** felicitation ceremony.

These awards recognised manufacturing facilities that are demonstrating operational excellence while building capabilities for future growth.

Among the organisations honoured were **General Instruments Consortium, IAC, Jeh Aerospace, Colgate-Palmolive India, Hitachi Energy, Toyoda Gosei, Sieger Global, CG Power & Industrial Solutions, Daimler India Commercial Vehicles, Raghu Vamsi Group, Jyoti Global Plast, Belrise Industries, Ester Industries, RSB Global, Skyline Herbals,**

Promising Plants felicitation

Champions of Manufacturing


















Pro-Arc Welding & Cutting Systems, Timken, and Autotech Industries.

These plants represent the diversity and strength of India's manufacturing sector from automotive and aerospace to specialty materials and precision engineering.

Honouring the champions behind the success

The festival also recognised individuals who have played a significant role in driving manufacturing excellence through the **Champions of Manufacturing** awards.

Leaders and professionals from organisations such as General Instruments Consortium, IAC, Hitachi Energy, Toyoda Gosei, Colgate-Palmolive India, Jeh Aerospace, CG Power & Industrial Solutions, Envision Energy, Raghu Vamsi Group, Belrise Industries, Ester Industries, Timken, and Skyline Herbals were honoured for their leadership and contributions.

These individuals exemplify the dedication, innovation,

and leadership that continue to drive India's manufacturing transformation.

Looking ahead to India's manufacturing future

As the festival concluded, speakers and participants reflected on the broader significance of the discussions that had taken place throughout the day.

India's manufacturing journey is entering a new phase—one defined not only by scale but also by capability, innovation, and global integration.

Platforms such as the Festival of Manufacturing play an important role in bringing together industry leaders, policymakers, and innovators to exchange ideas and shape the future of the sector.

As India moves closer to its vision of **Viksit Bharat 2047,** the collective efforts of manufacturers, entrepreneurs, and policymakers will be essential in building a resilient and globally competitive industrial ecosystem.

The fourth edition of the Festival of Manufacturing served as a powerful reminder that the future of Indian manufacturing will not be built by individual organisations alone, but through collaboration, shared ambition, and a commitment to excellence across the entire ecosystem.

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE IN INDIA'S PLASTICS & POLYMERS INDUSTRY

Held in Mumbai, the ET Now Polymers Best Plastics & Polymers Brands 2026 honoured industry leaders driving innovation, sustainability, and operational excellence across India's polymer ecosystem.

By Team ET Now Polymers

The ET Now Polymers Best Plastics & Polymers Brands 2026 ceremony, recently held on 26th March 2026 at Novotel, Mumbai, brought together some of the leading organisations from India's plastics and polymers ecosystem. Conceived as a platform to recognise excellence across the value chain, this initiative celebrates companies that have consistently demonstrated a forward-looking approach.

A Times Group initiative, the awards were supported by knowledge partner Breakthrough Management Group India Private Limited (BMGI), whose rigorous market research formed the foundation of the final selection. The evening commenced with opening remarks by **Amit Shanbaug, Editor of ET Now Machinist and ET Now Polymers,** who set the tone by emphasising the importance of resilience, technological advancement, and sustainability in building enduring brands.

The ceremony was further elevated by the presence of distinguished industry leaders. The **Chief Guest, Pushkar Gokhale, Executive Vice President and Business Head at Godrej & Boyce,** delivered a keynote that highlighted the intersection of innovation and operational excellence in modern manufacturing. He spoke about the need for companies to embrace advanced technologies while maintaining a strong focus on sustainability and long-term value creation. Complementing his perspective, **Guest of Honour Pramoud Rao, Founder and Managing Director of Zicom Group,** shared insights on leadership, entrepreneurship, and the role of technology in building scalable and future-ready enterprises.

Adding a unique dimension to the evening was **Dr. Pawan Agrawal,** internationally acclaimed speaker and management thinker, who drew powerful parallels from the **Mumbai Dabbawalas.** His session resonated deeply with the audience, reinforcing the importance of consistency, discipline, and human coordination in achieving operational excellence.

The felicitation recognised a distinguished lineup of companies, each of which has made a significant impact within its domain. Adeka India Private Limited was honoured for its expertise in specialty

RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE: ET NOW POLYMERS BEST PLASTICS & POLYMERS BRANDS 2026

chemical additives that enhance polymer performance and support advanced manufacturing applications. BirlaNu Limited received recognition for its strong contribution to piping and construction solutions, delivering durability and sustainability across infrastructure projects. Similarly, Calco Poly Technik Pvt Ltd stood out for its engineering plastics and consistent quality, making it a trusted partner across industries.

Covestro India Pvt Ltd was acknowledged for its global leadership in high-performance materials and its strong commitment to circular economy solutions. Moreover, Econ Machinery Pvt Ltd earned its place for pioneering polymer processing and recycling technologies that improve efficiency and product quality. Electronica Plastic Machines Pvt Ltd was recognised for advancing injection moulding solutions through precision engineering and continuous technological innovation.

Adding to the above industry names, was GMS Machinery Pvt. Ltd, felicitated for its robust recycling and conversion technologies that transform plastic waste into reusable materials, contributing to sustainability goals. Likewise, Helios Automation received acclaim for enabling smarter manufacturing through advanced automation systems. IGUS (India) Private Limited was honoured for its motion plastics innovations that reduce maintenance and enhance operational efficiency across industries.

Furthermore, JJ Plastalloy Pvt. Ltd. was recognised for its expertise in masterbatches and polymer compounds, supporting customised and sustainable material solutions. Mamata Machinery Limited was celebrated for its leadership in flexible packaging and converting machines, driving productivity and precision globally. Maxwell Engineering Solutions Limited earned recognition for its manufacturing new and refurbished die plates, pelletizing blades, tapped driving bushes, blade holders with reconditioning and surface grinding services.

> "Honouring Best Plastics and Polymers Brands spotlights companies turning innovation into real impact—scaling sustainable processes and setting benchmarks that push India's plastics industry toward smarter competitive growth.

Milacron India Pvt. Ltd. was acknowledged for its comprehensive plastics processing technologies, empowering manufacturers with scalable and high-performance solutions. N.A. Roto Machines & Moulds India was recognised for its capabilities in rotational moulding equipment, enabling efficient production of complex plastic products.

Another addition to the felicitations was ONGC Petro additions Limited (OPaL), which received accolades for strengthening India's polymer value chain through its large-scale petrochemical operations. Reliance Industries Limited was honoured as a global leader in petrochemicals and polyester production, setting benchmarks in integration, scale, and sustainability. SICA Plastic Machinery Pvt. Ltd. was recognised for its high-technology downstream equipment that enhances automation in pipe extrusion processes. Yizumi Precision Machinery (India) Pvt. Ltd. earned its award for advancing injection moulding and die-casting technologies with a focus on intelligent manufacturing. Finally, Yudo Hot Runners India Pvt Ltd was felicitated for its advanced thermal control systems that improve efficiency and reduce material waste in injection moulding.

Each recognition symbolised market success & reflected a company's ability to deliver consistent value. The felicitation of these brands highlighted the breadth and depth of India's plastics and polymers sector, showcasing how companies are aligning with global trends while addressing local industry needs. As the evening concluded with a group felicitation and networking session, the event left a lasting impression of collaboration, innovation, and shared ambition.

INDIA'S PLASTIC RESET BEGINS

A sweeping policy shift is redefining how plastic is produced, used and recycled, pushing industry from compliance-driven action to true circular responsibility.

By Team ET Now Polymers

There are moments when policy quietly changes the direction of an entire industry. The notification of India's Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules, 2026 on March 31 is one such moment.

At first glance, it may seem like just another regulatory update. But look closer, and it becomes clear that this is not about incremental tightening. It is about changing the rules of the game.

For years, the plastics conversation in India has revolved around collection. How much waste is generated, how much is picked up, how much is processed. The assumption was simple. If we improve collection systems, the problem will gradually solve itself.

The 2026 amendment challenges that thinking.

It shifts the focus from collecting waste to fundamentally rethinking what goes into the system in the first place. For the first time, the rules mandate that producers, importers and brand owners must use a defined and increasing share of recycled plastic in their packaging.

This is a significant departure.

Instead of asking companies to manage waste after it is created, the policy now pushes them to design differently from the start. Packaging is no longer just about cost and performance. It is about responsibility.

The numbers reflect the scale of this shift. For rigid plastic packaging, recycled content requirements begin at around 30 percent and are expected to rise to 60 percent in the coming years. Flexible and multi-layered packaging, historically harder to recycle, also come under defined targets, albeit at lower starting points.

This phased approach is important. It recognises the complexity of the industry while still setting a clear direction of travel.

But recycled content is only one part of the story.

The amendment also strengthens Extended Producer Responsibility, or EPR, a framework that makes companies accountable for the entire lifecycle of the plastic they introduce into the market. This is not a new concept, but the 2026 rules take it further by tightening compliance, expanding definitions and introducing more robust monitoring mechanisms.

In simple terms, it is no longer enough to say that waste will be managed. Companies now have to prove it.

There is also an interesting market mechanism built into the system. The introduction of tradable EPR certificates allows companies that exceed their recycling targets to generate credits, which can then be sold to those falling short.

On paper, this creates flexibility. In practice, it could reshape how recycling is financed and scaled in India.

The rules also expand the definition of end-of-life disposal to include methods such as waste-to-energy, co-processing and road construction, acknowledging that recycling alone cannot address the entire problem. At the same time, they distinguish between true recycling and processes that merely convert plastic into intermediate forms.

What emerges is a more layered, more realistic view of the plastic lifecycle.

Another notable shift lies in enforcement.

Responsibility is no longer concentrated at the central level. Local bodies, urban authorities and even panchayats are being given a larger role in implementation. This decentralisation reflects an understanding that waste management is ultimately a ground-level challenge.

Yet, for all its ambition, the success of these rules will depend on one thing. Execution.

Historically, there has been a gap between targets and reality. While earlier frameworks aimed for high collection rates, actual recovery has often hovered around 50 to 60 percent. Monitoring has relied heavily on self-reporting, and verification mechanisms have not always kept pace.

The 2026 amendment attempts to address this by introducing audit systems, stricter reporting requirements and clearer accountability structures. But whether these translate into measurable impact will depend on how consistently they are implemented across states and sectors.

For the industry, this marks a turning point.

Compliance is no longer a back-end function. It is becoming a core part of business strategy. Companies will need to rethink material choices, invest in recycling partnerships and redesign packaging portfolios.

Those who treat this as a regulatory burden may struggle. Those who see it as an opportunity could find themselves ahead of the curve.

Because at its heart, this policy is about more than waste management.

It is about accelerating India's transition to a circular economy, where materials are not discarded after use but brought back into the system. It is about moving from a linear model of produce, use and dispose to one that is regenerative by design.

And perhaps most

importantly, it signals a broader shift in how we think about plastics.

For a long time, the material itself has been at the centre of the debate. Is plastic good or bad. Should it be banned or replaced. The 2026 rules move the conversation in a different direction.

They focus on systems.

How plastic is designed. How it is used. How it is recovered. And how responsibility is shared across the value chain.

That is a more complex conversation. But it is also a more meaningful one.

Because the future of plastics will not be decided by a single breakthrough or a single ban.

It will be shaped by how effectively policy, industry and behaviour come together.

The 2026 amendment does not solve the problem overnight.

But it does something equally important.

It redraws the starting line.

SEW-EURODRIVE'S NEW CHENNAI FACILITY

SEW-EURODRIVE India has inaugurated its new Drive Technology Centre (DTC) in Chennai, one of South India's fastest-growing industrial hubs. Conceived with a long-term perspective, the facility is designed as a robust platform built for generations. It strengthens SEW-EURODRIVE's ability to serve customers across southern and eastern India with higher responsiveness, reliability, and long-term support.

Spread across 12.27 acres, the 21,350-sqm assembly and service facility provides the scale and flexibility needed to support customer growth, evolving application requirements, and future expansion. It reflects SEW-EURODRIVE's commitment to sustainable development, technology leadership, and long-term partnership with Indian industry, combining global engineering standards with strong local execution.

The facility complies with green building norms, incorporating natural daylight, solar power generation, and rainwater harvesting. Energy-efficient construction and advanced climate control reduce shopfloor temperatures by up to 3°C, supporting stable production conditions, consistent quality, and improved working environments.

At its core is a 15,000-sqm assembly shop with digitisation-ready, high-productivity assembly cells based on a single-piece flow concept, along with SEW-EURODRIVE India's first semi-automated painting booth to ensure consistent surface quality and higher throughput.

With this DTC, SEW-EURODRIVE reinforces its role as a trusted partner, investing in capabilities that support customers' long-term industrial growth in India.

Picture a young woman fresh out of engineering college, with a passion to pursue her studies and choose a right career. Manufacturing was her first choice. It still carried the image of being tough, gritty, and somehow not meant for her. Aditi Sharma wants to change that perception.

With decades of experience on shop floors, and now as the **Co-Chair of ASSOCHAM's National Council on Manufacturing,** she has seen it all. The biases, the breakthroughs, the quiet struggles, and the big wins. Now, she is speaking openly about what needs to change to bring more women into this crucial sector driving India's growth.

BREAKING BARRIERS

Aditi Sharma, Co-Chairman of ASSOCHAM's National Council on Manufacturing, opens up about mindset shifts, policy bridges, and tech-driven equality to lift women into leadership roles.

By Amit Shanbaug

Cracking the Mindset Barrier

According to Aditi, the biggest hurdle starts in the mind. Manufacturing is simply not presented as a welcoming space for women in schools or career conversations. As a result, even the brightest students often choose different paths.

Those who do enter the field often find themselves on the outside looking in. Informal discussions and late-night decision-making circles can exclude them, making it harder to influence outcomes or feel fully included.

On the shop floor, biases show up quickly. Many still view manufacturing as physically demanding work suited only for men. Instead of asking women if they are willing to take on the challenge, assumptions are made for them. Aditi points out that capability is not the issue. Women consistently perform at the top academically. The real barrier is the outdated belief that certain roles belong to men.

When Life Events Shape Perception

As women move into phases like marriage and motherhood, perceptions become even more rigid. Companies often assume they will step back from their careers instead of exploring flexible solutions like remote work, part-time roles, or childcare support.

Aditi experienced this herself. With no extended family support and limited childcare options in India at the time, she had to take career breaks. What made the difference was working with organizations that understood these challenges and built policies to support women during this phase of life.

In fact, some of these companies now have 50 to 60 percent women in leadership roles. The takeaway is simple: when organizations support women through life transitions, they do not lose talent, they strengthen it.

Even then, doubts persisted. Questions about whether she could handle leadership roles with young children followed her. What helped her push through was having a strong mentor who stood by her and organizations that valued her potential over her personal circumstances.

Climbing to Leadership Roles

For women aiming to move into plant head or CXO roles, Aditi highlights three essentials.

First is self-belief. You have to raise your hand and say you are ready, even if you feel only partially prepared.

Second is **having a mentor** who backs you and supports your growth.

Third is **organisational commitment.** Companies need to actively prioritise hiring and promoting capable women.

But it is not just about systems. Women also need to step forward, take on additional responsibilities, and participate in strategic conversations. Aditi encourages women to adopt a proactive approach, much like their male counterparts who often take initiative beyond their defined roles.

Basic infrastructure also matters. Gender-neutral workplaces, equal pay, and unbiased hiring practices are foundational. Once these are in place, opportunities begin to open up naturally.

ASSOCHAM's Role in Driving Change

Aditi's journey at ASSOCHAM has shown her the importance of collaboration between industry and policymakers. Real change happens when both sides work together rather than in isolation.

ASSOCHAM acts as a bridge, helping overcome regulatory challenges that can enable global investment. By facilitating dialogue and aligning goals, it has helped make India a more attractive manufacturing destination.

For Aditi, this work is deeply personal. It is about turning ideas into real opportunities through inclusive policies and committed leadership.

Technology Changing the Game

Technology is quietly transforming manufacturing into a more inclusive space. Automation, AI, and digital systems are reducing the need for physical labor and shifting the focus toward problem-solving and creativity.

Tasks that once required intense manual effort are now handled by machines, allowing people to focus on innovation and decision-making. This shift is breaking down traditional gender barriers and making the industry more accessible to everyone.

Aditi sees modern manufacturing as a blend of science and creativity, where human intelligence works alongside machines.

Skills That Make a Difference

For young women considering a career in manufacturing, Aditi emphasises a few key skills. A genuine interest in creating something tangible is important. There is a unique satisfaction in seeing individual components come together to form a finished product. Problem-solving is essential, as every day brings new challenges. Collaboration matters, since manufacturing involves working across multiple teams and functions. And finally, strong data skills can set you apart, helping drive precision and reliability. These abilities turn everyday challenges into opportunities for growth and innovation.

A Vision for the Future

Looking ahead, Aditi envisions a future where job postings simply ask for engineers, without specifying gender. She believes many of the perceived limitations are mental constructs. Women already perform physically demanding tasks in other sectors, proving they are more than capable.

> "Aditi's journey highlights how supportive policies, mentorship, and evolving technology can help women overcome career barriers in manufacturing, enabling them to lead confidently while reshaping workplaces into more inclusive, opportunity-driven environments.

The goal is to create truly equal workplaces, from facilities to leadership roles, supported by fair policies and unbiased hiring practices. When organizations focus on talent alone, leadership diversity follows naturally.

Her own journey is proof of what is possible. With determination, the right support, and inclusive systems, women can not only enter manufacturing but lead it.

India's manufacturing future needs that leadership. The question now is how quickly we can build an environment where it thrives.

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