

# Aditya Birla Ventures backs US startup Articul8 in AI race

Articul8 specializes in AI models that run within their own servers to address data concerns

By Anand Chandra  
NEW DELHI

**A**ditya Birla Ventures, the private capital investment arm of the Aditya Birla Group, said on Thursday that it was one of the investors backing a \$70 million Series B funding round in US-based artificial intelligence (AI) startup Articul8.

Though the company didn't disclose the amount it has invested, this bet makes the move to fashion conglomerates the latest to join India's top business groups venturing into AI, even as concerns grow that the technology may be overhyped.

The Santa Clara, California head-quartered startup, which claimed to have hit a valuation of "over \$300 million" with this funding round, specialises in offering companies AI models that run on its own servers and within their own IT systems, as a bid to address concerns of data leakage.

It wasn't clear whether the group, spanning cement, fashion, lending and insurance, metals, power, and telecommunications, will integrate Articul8's AI features into its services.

Aryaman Birla, founder of Aditya Birla Ventures and the son of the group's chairman Ranar Mangalram Birla, said, in a press statement, the company had "strong belief and conviction in the founding team, and the investment aligns with our aim to back outstanding founders building great businesses of tomorrow".

Mint's attempt to reach Arun Subramanian, co-founder and chief executive of Articul8, did not immediately elicit a response.

Aditya Birla Ventures was set up in 2011 by Aryaman Birla as the group's private capital arm. It is headed by Py-



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ush Bansal, who has over 17 years of experience in the private equity and venture capital sector.

The firm invests in Pre-Series A to Series B rounds and has backed 12 startups to date, including UptimeAI, a predictive maintenance solutions platform

On 20 November, it disclosed \$1 billion in funding from a US-based asset management firm, TIG, for Tata's AI data centre play.

"India stands at a pivotal point in history. Global trade and supply chains are in a state of flux. Our demographics

drive annual general meeting (AGM).

On 20 November, Indian Industries Ltd's (IIL) data centre joint venture, Digital Connection, also announced a \$75 billion data centre at an investment of \$1 billion over five years.

On 28 August, IIL chairman Mahesh Ambani announced Bellare Intelligence, a subsidiary dedicated to AI.

"A decade ago, digital services became a new growth engine for IIL. Now, the opportunity bellcurve with AI is just as large, if not larger. Digitised and delivered digital everywhere and for every Indian. Similarly, Bellare Intelligence promises to deliver AI everywhere for every Indian," Ambani said at the company's 49th annual general meeting in 2025.

On 14 October, the Adani Group partnered with Google to its \$2-billion AI data centre push.

Larsen & Toubro, India's largest engineering conglomerate, also told Mint on the same day that it would invest up to \$3 billion in the next three years to build its AI data-centre infrastructure.

The moves by Indian conglomerates show how AI is becoming a foundational infrastructure across industries, according to experts. "It's natural that India's

top conglomerates would want to lease AI capabilities. Alongside cost arbitrage, this increases their ability to make early strides in AI, offer AI applications and solutions to clients, and potentially create new business areas," said Kishore Kompella, veteran analyst and founder of technology consultancy firm, IIPAI Research.

"While there are concerns around an AI bubble, most of it is centred around infrastructure—as far as applications and workflows are concerned, there's hardly any doubt that AI will be transformational," Kompella added.

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## AI RUSH

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**TOP** conglomerates want in-house AI as it arbitrages costs and potentially create new business areas

for asset-heavy industries, and Digantara, a space situational awareness platform that is mapping the space.

On 9 October, Tata Consultancy Services Ltd said in its September quarter earnings call that it would invest up to \$6.5 billion to build a 1 giga-watt (GW) data centre specifically for AI workloads,

promise a sweet spot of unparalleled talent availability for many decades ahead. AI promises to change everything, again, much as the internet did. For our nation, more than others, this moment of flux can be a catalyst for accelerated progress," said Tata Sons' chairman N. Chandrababhan in the conglomerate's