



Bridging Horizons Equips Goa's Youth Through Industry-Academia Collaboration

Vasco, July 08, 2025: With growing emphasis on aligning education with industry needs, *Bridging Horizons: A Confluence of Industry, Institute & Innovation* held its final session at MES Vasant Joshi College of Arts and Commerce, Zuarinagar.

Introduced by the ASSOCHAM Goa State Development Council in collaboration with the Department of Information Technology, Electronics & Communications (DITE&C), Government of Goa, the initiative was launched in September 2024 to strengthen partnerships between educational institutions and industry.

The core objective of Bridging Horizons was to address skill gaps, align academic learning with current and future industry needs, and empower students to embrace emerging technologies and entrepreneurial opportunities. Across six campus-based editions, the initiative connected students with leaders from startups, technology firms, academia, and government, encouraging practical engagement, mentorship, and exposure to innovation-driven careers.

Speaking on the success of the initiative, **Shri Rohan A. Khaunte**, Hon'ble Minister for Information Technology, Electronics & Communications, Government of Goa, said, *“Strengthening collaboration and continuous engagement between academia and industry is key to making our youth industry-ready. Our vision is to ensure zero brain drain by creating opportunities within Goa, enabling youth to stay rooted while contributing to the state’s growth. Through the DITE&C, we are driving initiatives focused on skilling, reskilling, and upskilling to bridge the gap between job seekers and job creators, and position Goa as a hub for quality employment and digital innovation.”*

Throughout the series, each edition addressed a distinct theme ranging from startup culture and Industry 4.0 to inclusive innovation and women-led enterprise, reflecting the evolving needs of the academic and industrial landscape. The final session focused on the theme ***AI Shaping Industries*** and featured a panel discussion moderated by **Syam Ivaturi**, CMO and Co-Founder of DishaAI. The panel featured **Yashvit Naik** (Co-Founder & CTO, Onstro), **Gaurav Dixit** (CEO & Co-Founder, Skillops.ai), and **Damodar Pai Patnekar** (CEO & Co-Founder, Bodhami) shared insights on how artificial intelligence is reshaping business operations, transforming workforce demands, and unlocking new opportunities for innovation and growth across sectors.

Mangirish Salelkar, CEO & Co-Founder of UMANG Group and Chairman of ASSOCHAM Goa Council, reflected on the series, *“Bringing industry leaders to campuses across the state was about providing students with direct access to real-world insights. I want to see the youth of Goa become employable, build companies, and emerge as the next generation of leaders in the startup ecosystem.”*

As Goa strengthens its position as a hub for innovation and digital governance, initiatives like *Bridging Horizons* highlight the importance of sustained partnerships between government, academia, and industry. The groundwork has been laid for future collaborations aimed at preparing the youth of Goa for tomorrow’s opportunities.