

IACF marks 25th Unity Dinner anniversary with focus on AI's impact on communities

By Biz | April 11, 2026 | India



Share the news [Machine Learning & Artificial Intelligence](#)



By Ritu Jha-

The Indo-American Community Federation marked its 25th anniversary of Unity Dinner on April 3 at the India Community Center, bringing together technology and civic leaders to examine how artificial intelligence is reshaping communities.

The event, held under the theme “The Future of AI and Its Impact on Our Communities,” highlighted the organization’s mission of cultural exchange and community empowerment. The group was founded 32 years ago by Jeevan Zutshi.



A central feature of the evening was a panel discussion led by Tasawar Jalali, author of “Applied AI Governance,” who guided a conversation among leaders from cybersecurity, healthcare, government and enterprise technology. [Indian American Doctors](#)

“We serve not just the technology, but the trust, the jobs, and the governance gaps that come with it,” Jalali said.

Jalali warned that the rapid pace of AI development risks outstripping institutional oversight, arguing that governance will ultimately determine the technology’s societal impact. He pointed to AI’s growing role in city services, healthcare decision-making and enterprise operations, raising concerns about whether organizations are adopting it strategically.

“AI’s societal impact will be defined less by the technology itself and more by whether institutions govern it responsibly,” he said.

He also highlighted challenges unique to government adoption, describing a system slowed by regulatory requirements and risk aversion. While public agencies face strict oversight and accountability standards, he said, excessive procedural layers can hinder progress without necessarily reducing risk. [Machine Learning & Artificial Intelligence](#)

“Moving fast without governance is not innovation, it is unmanaged risk,” Jalali said.

During the discussion, Jalali raised questions of accountability in AI systems, including liability when automated decisions cause harm. He noted that existing legal frameworks are designed for human decision-makers and have yet to fully address autonomous systems.

“When an AI system takes an action that causes harm to a resident, who is liable?” he asked and how it can be used to strengthen and grow public trust.

Lily Mei, former mayor of the city of Fremont, Calif. stated as a panelist that trust is the foundation of any strong community, yet right now that foundation is under real strain. Too many people feel their voices don’t count, that they’re not part of the process or truly included. That skepticism isn’t unfounded; it reflects lived experiences. The real question is how we choose to respond. That’s where leadership matters most.

Mei further stated that she during her tenure have partnered with cities, with fellow mayors and regional leaders to rebuild that trust. “Together, we’ve developed shared approaches, including AI playbooks, that help ensure innovation is guided by transparency and accountability,” Mei said. “As we adopt new technologies, we’re making intentional, thoughtful choices. Whether it’s exploring predictive analytics in policing or using data more effectively, our focus is clear, to better serve our communities and respond to their needs with greater precision and care.”

Jalali also pointed to emerging “gray areas” in AI operations, where systems may function as intended yet still create unintended consequences such as financial loss or regulatory violations.

“The grey areas are where AI systems can authenticate correctly, call the right APIs, and still cause financial loss or privacy violations,” he said.

He added that the role of chief information security officers is evolving, with greater responsibility for governing AI behavior in real time rather than focusing solely on external threats.

“The CISO is the only executive positioned to close that gap,” Jalali said.

Panelist Krishnan Chellakarai addressed concerns about job security amid rapid AI adoption and recent layoffs in the technology sector, offering a more optimistic outlook.

[Machine Learning & Artificial Intelligence](#)

“I think AI is going to actually help,” Chellakarai said.

He said AI will require workers to develop higher-level skills, shifting from task execution to system design and architecture. While AI can assist with coding and automation, he said, human expertise remains essential for integrating and guiding those systems.

“People will have to really upskill themselves and think like an architect,” he said.

Chellakarai said AI’s impact extends beyond the technology sector, affecting industries across the economy. He emphasized that human oversight remains critical even as automation expands.

“There has to be a human looking at all of those aspects and checking whether it is really doing the right thing,” he said.

He also highlighted challenges facing early-career professionals, noting that traditional education must evolve to include AI-specific skills and continuous learning to keep pace with rapid innovation.

“AI is changing every two to three months,” he said.

He said nonprofit organizations and community platforms can play a key role in helping workers adapt by providing ongoing training and development opportunities.

“While AI may automate tasks, it cannot automate vision,” Chellakarai said.

Another panelist, Moinul Khan, co-founder and CEO of Aurascape, focused on the implications of AI for cybersecurity.

“AI is going to disrupt the way we think about cybersecurity; the entire paradigm is changing,” Khan said.

He said traditional security approaches, designed for static web traffic, are not equipped to handle dynamic, learning-based AI systems that evolve in real time.

“Cybersecurity needs to be done in a very different way for the next 20 years,” he said.

Khan described a shift in how AI agents are treated within digital systems, noting that they increasingly function like non-human employees. This creates new challenges for authentication, monitoring and financial accountability.

[Machine Learning & Artificial Intelligence](#)

“If one of the AI agents misbehave and spend money improperly, the bank is responsible,” he said.

He added that attitudes toward AI security are changing, with more organizations beginning to see it as an enabler rather than a cost center.

“That is changing very rapidly and creating new opportunities,” Khan said.

Khan said legacy security tools are insufficient for the emerging AI landscape, calling for new architectures designed specifically for AI-driven environments.

“Traditional security tools were built for a different era; AI breaks those assumptions,” he said.

He encouraged startups and technologists to focus on solving complex problems rather than pursuing quick wins, emphasizing innovation as the key to staying competitive in a rapidly evolving field.

“We’re solving hard problems with a high barrier to entry, and that’s what startups should be doing,” Khan said.