

FEBRUARY 2026  
**WORK IN PROGRESS**

At Social Alpha, we are in the middle of a great experiment, and everything will remain a work-in-progress.

As India's growth accelerates, the question is no longer whether innovation exists, but whether the systems around it are ready to test, refine, absorb and scale it. This edition of Work in Progress looks closely at those systems, and at the innovations attempting to reshape them from within.

Science-led work in animal health and livelihoods received national recognition, with Prof Dr Punniamurthy Natesan named among the 2026 Padma Shri awardees. Advances in health technologies from the portfolio were also recognised by Forbes, reflecting progress in clinical and regulatory translation. Indian deep-tech capability featured in global economic forums, signalling its growing relevance in international collaboration. The work ahead lies in building pathways that allow innovation to hold up under validation, integration, and scale.

Thank you for reading Work In Progress and for staying engaged with the work of translating innovation into real-world systems.

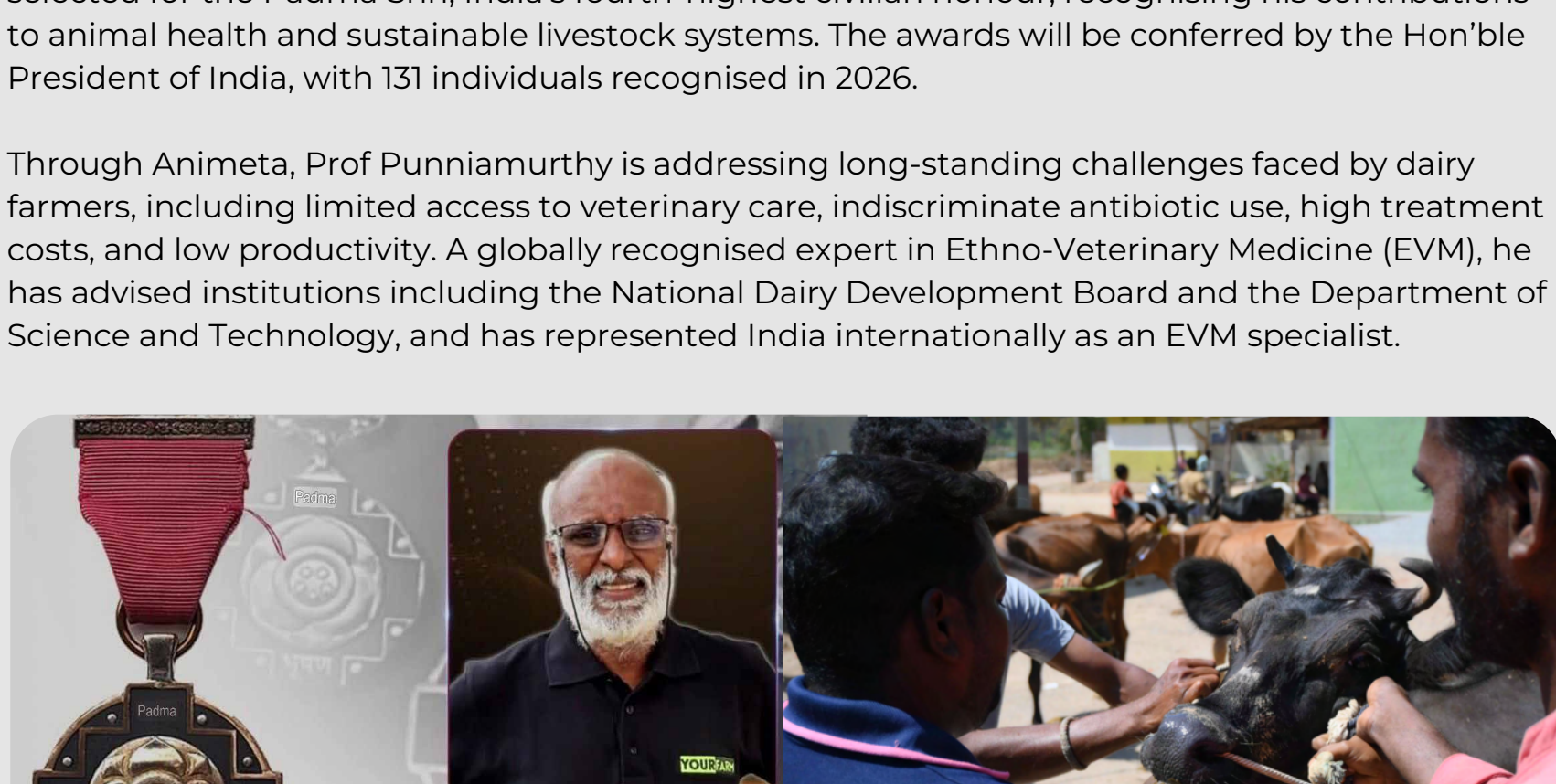
**Enabling Science and Technology for People and Planet**

India's economic rise has brought scale and opportunity, but it has also intensified pressure on energy systems, materials and natural resources. As the world's third largest economy and one of its largest emitters, the challenge before us is no longer whether growth is possible, but how it is shaped.

Social Alpha has launched Techtonic: Innovations for Sustainability to identify and support science and technology innovations that can move sustainably from lab to deployment, addressing critical gaps across energy transition, new materials, and natural resource management.

Techtonic is open to innovators and start-ups across stages, from early research to deployment-ready solutions. Selected start-ups will receive non-dilutive grant support, alongside market access, mentorship, and pathways to seed capital, through three tracks offering up to ₹60 lakhs. Applications close on 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2026.

[Apply now](#)



**CENTRE STAGE**

**Prof Dr Punniamurthy Natesan Among 2026 Padma Shri Awardees**

Prof Dr Punniamurthy Natesan, Founder of Animeta, a Social Alpha portfolio company, has been selected for the Padma Shri, India's fourth-highest civilian honour, recognising his contributions to animal health and sustainable livestock systems. The awards will be conferred by the Hon'ble President of India, with 131 individuals recognised in 2026.

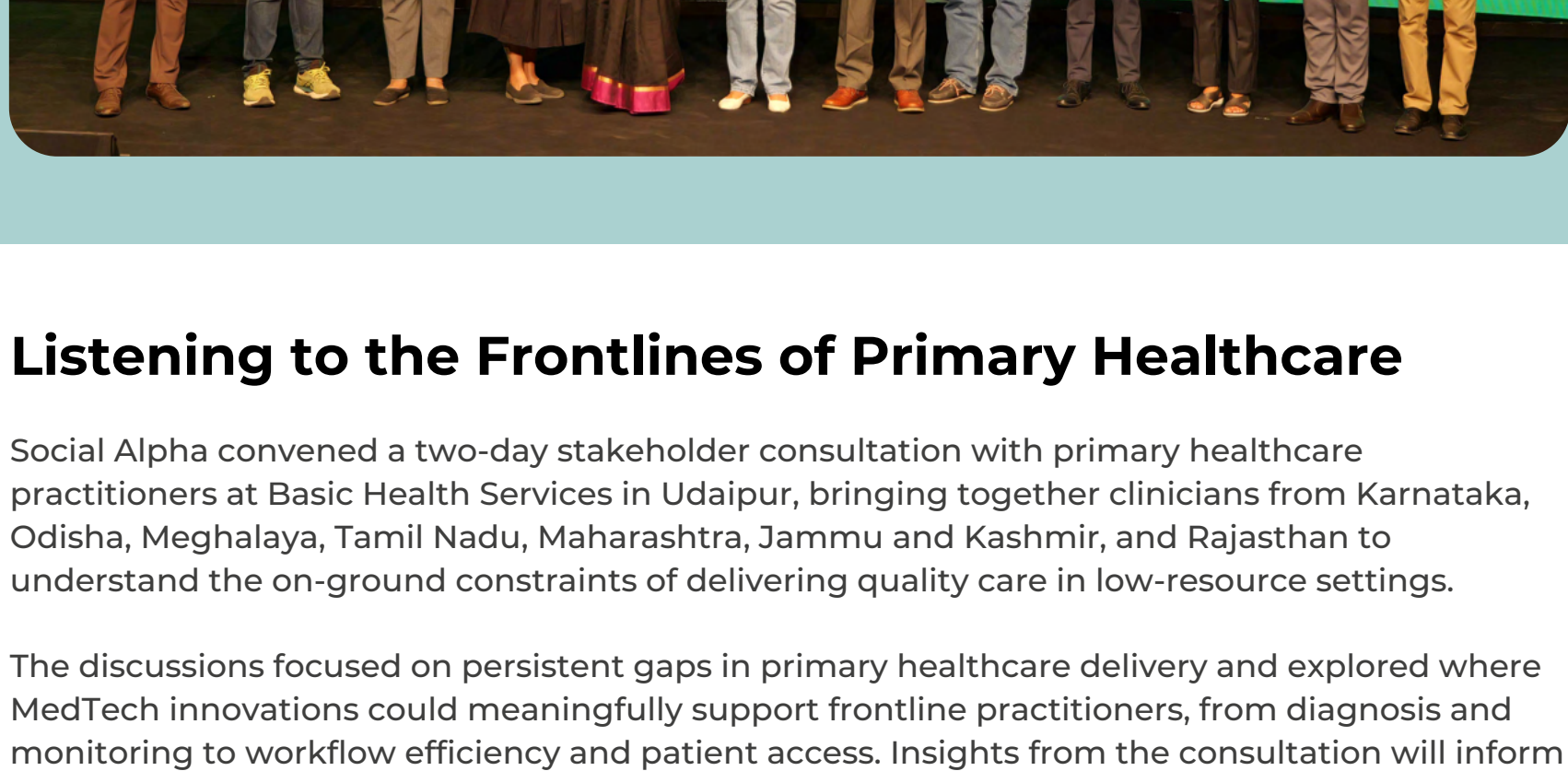
Through Animeta, Prof Punniamurthy is addressing long-standing challenges faced by dairy farmers, including limited access to veterinary care, indiscriminate antibiotic use, high treatment costs, and low productivity. A globally recognised expert in Ethno-Veterinary Medicine (EVM), he has advised institutions including the National Dairy Development Board and the Department of Science and Technology, and has represented India internationally as an EVM specialist.



**MONTHLY SCOOP**

**Philanthropy, Research, and the Case for Translation**

Manoj Kumar, Founder, Social Alpha, participated as a panellist at the Ignite Summit 2026, convened by the Ignite Life Science Foundation in Mumbai. The panel, titled Collaborative Ecosystems — Integrating Philanthropy with National Research Imperatives, brought together leaders from science, policy, and industry to examine how philanthropic capital can more effectively strengthen India's research and innovation ecosystem. The discussion surfaced a set of deceptively simple but critical questions, whether we prioritise people, projects, or infrastructure, and whether mission remains the true anchor. The consensus was clear, progress requires all three, supported by enabling policy, long-term horizons, and global collaboration, with Manoj emphasising innovation-led philanthropy and incubator models as critical to enabling translational research and science-driven entrepreneurship.



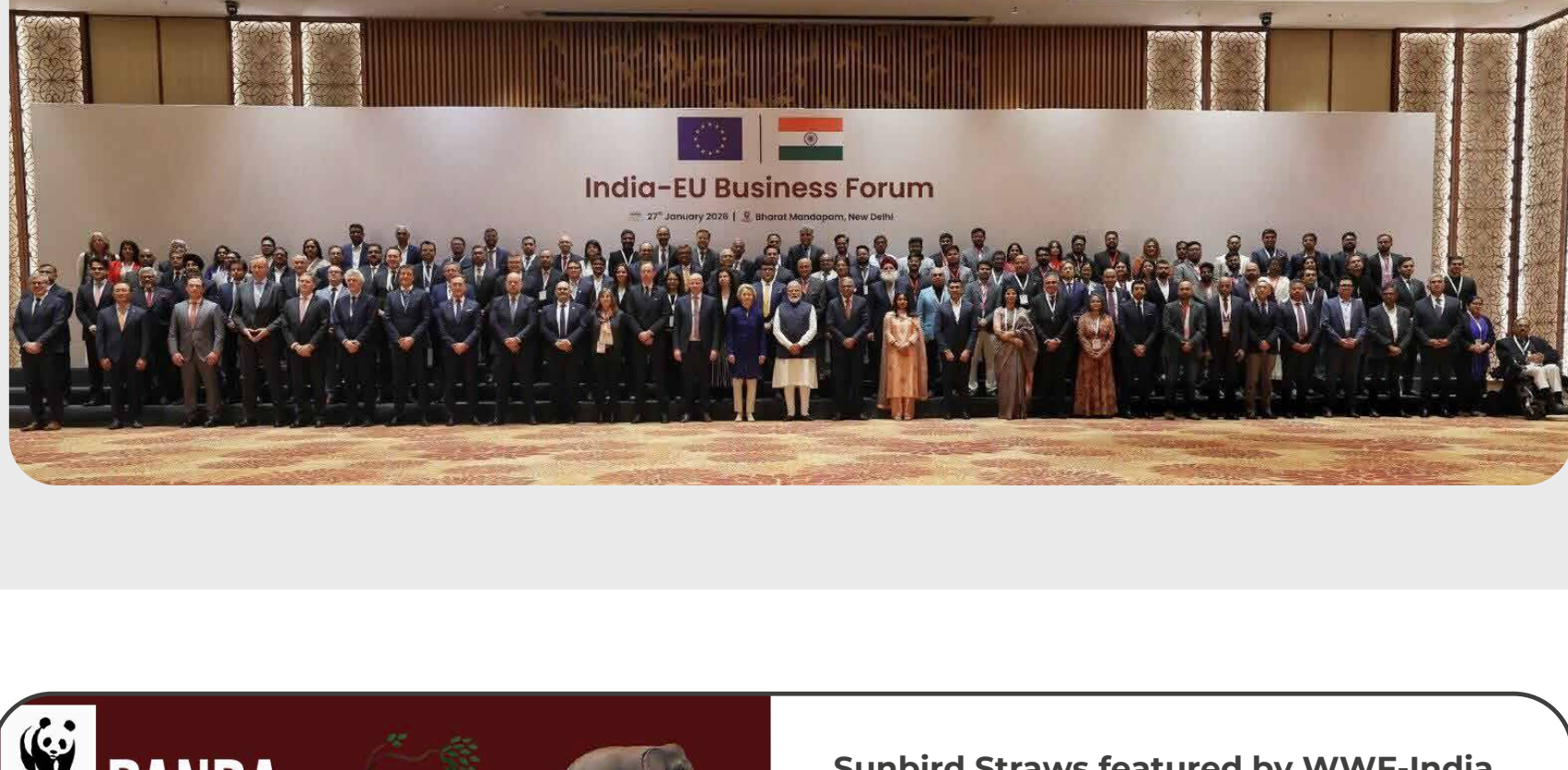
**Turning Bengaluru Into a Climate Sandbox**

UnboxingBLR, in partnership with Social Alpha and WTFund, and supported by the Government of Karnataka and the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA), announced the five winning start-ups of the Namma Bengaluru Challenge '26 (NBC '26). Each selected start-up will receive ₹25 lakhs to deploy and pilot its innovation across Bengaluru.

Manoj Kumar, Founder, Social Alpha, emphasised the role of such platforms in de-risking emerging climate technologies, enabling real-world validation, and strengthening pathways from pilot to scale. By aligning entrepreneurs, industry partners, and city systems, NBC '26 offers a replicable model for how Indian cities can accelerate climate action through collaboration rather than isolated pilots.

The NBC '26 winners include:

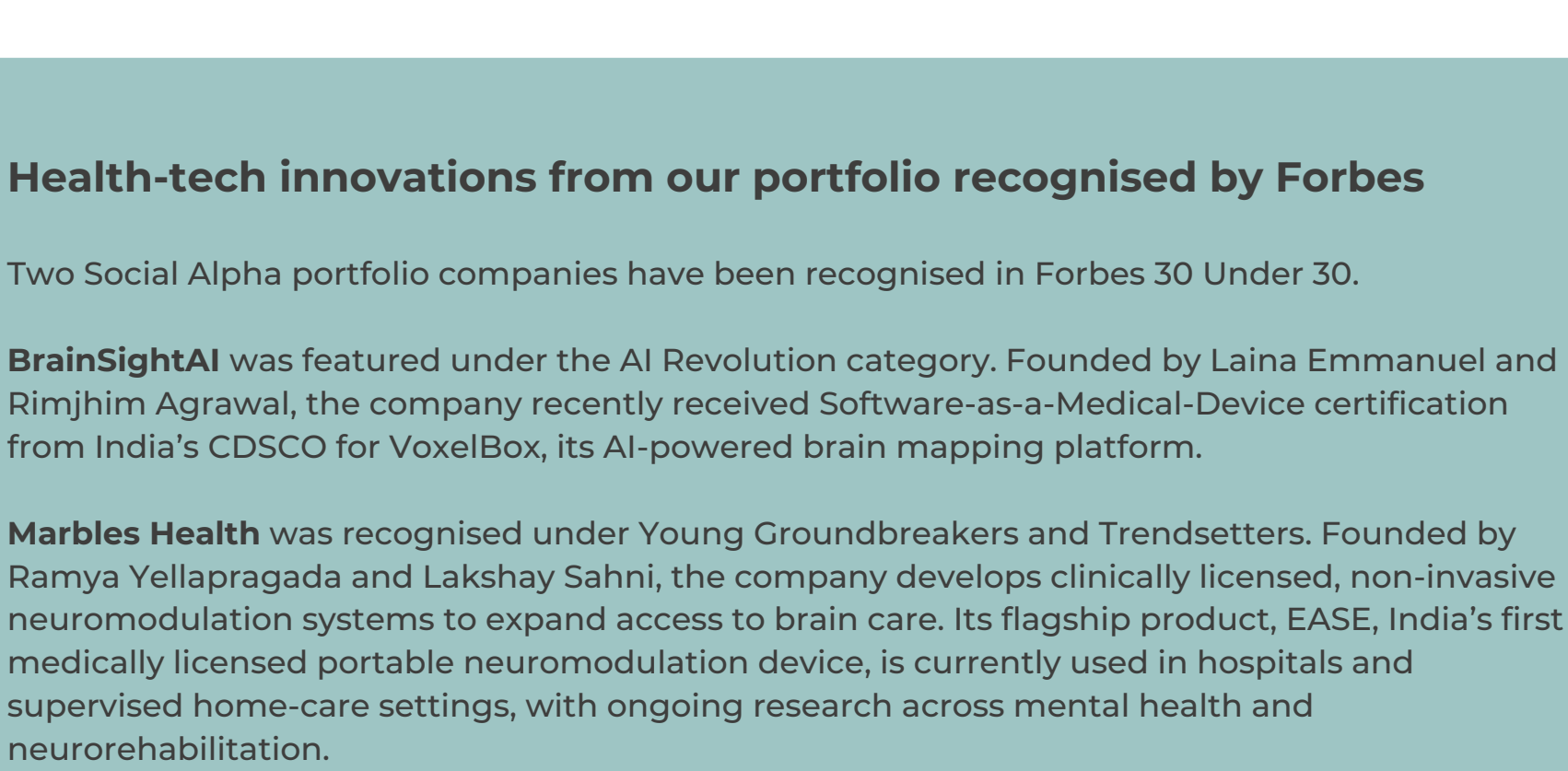
- Carbon Concrete Design
- SatiQ Concrete Manufacturer
- Tellus Habitat
- Go Do Good
- Sunbird Straws



**Listening to the Frontlines of Primary Healthcare**

Social Alpha convened a two-day stakeholder consultation with primary healthcare practitioners at Basic Health Services in Udaipur, bringing together clinicians from Karnataka, Odisha, Meghalaya, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Jammu and Kashmir, and Rajasthan to understand the on-ground constraints of delivering quality care in low-resource settings.

The discussions focused on persistent gaps in primary healthcare delivery and explored where MedTech innovations could meaningfully support frontline practitioners, from diagnosis and monitoring to workflow efficiency and patient access. Insights from the consultation will inform future efforts to align technology development more closely with primary healthcare needs.

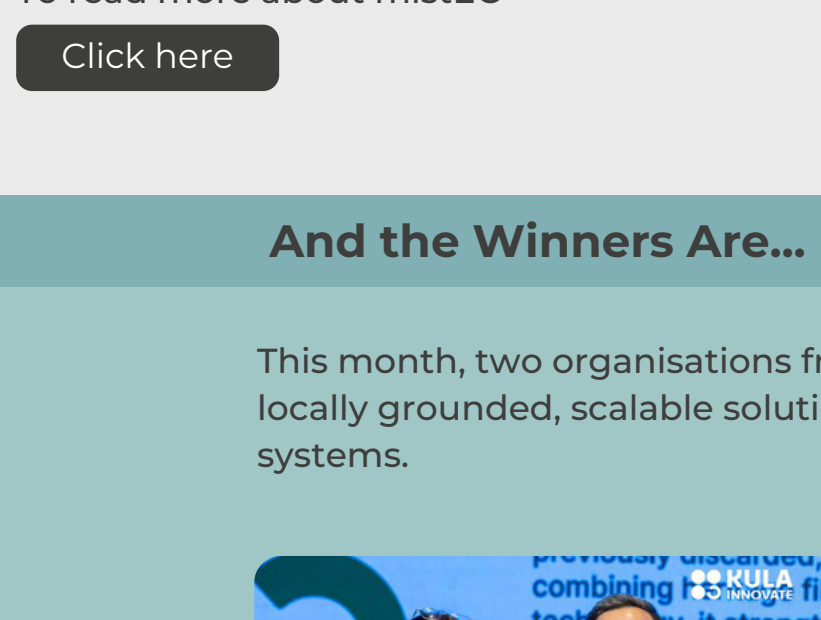
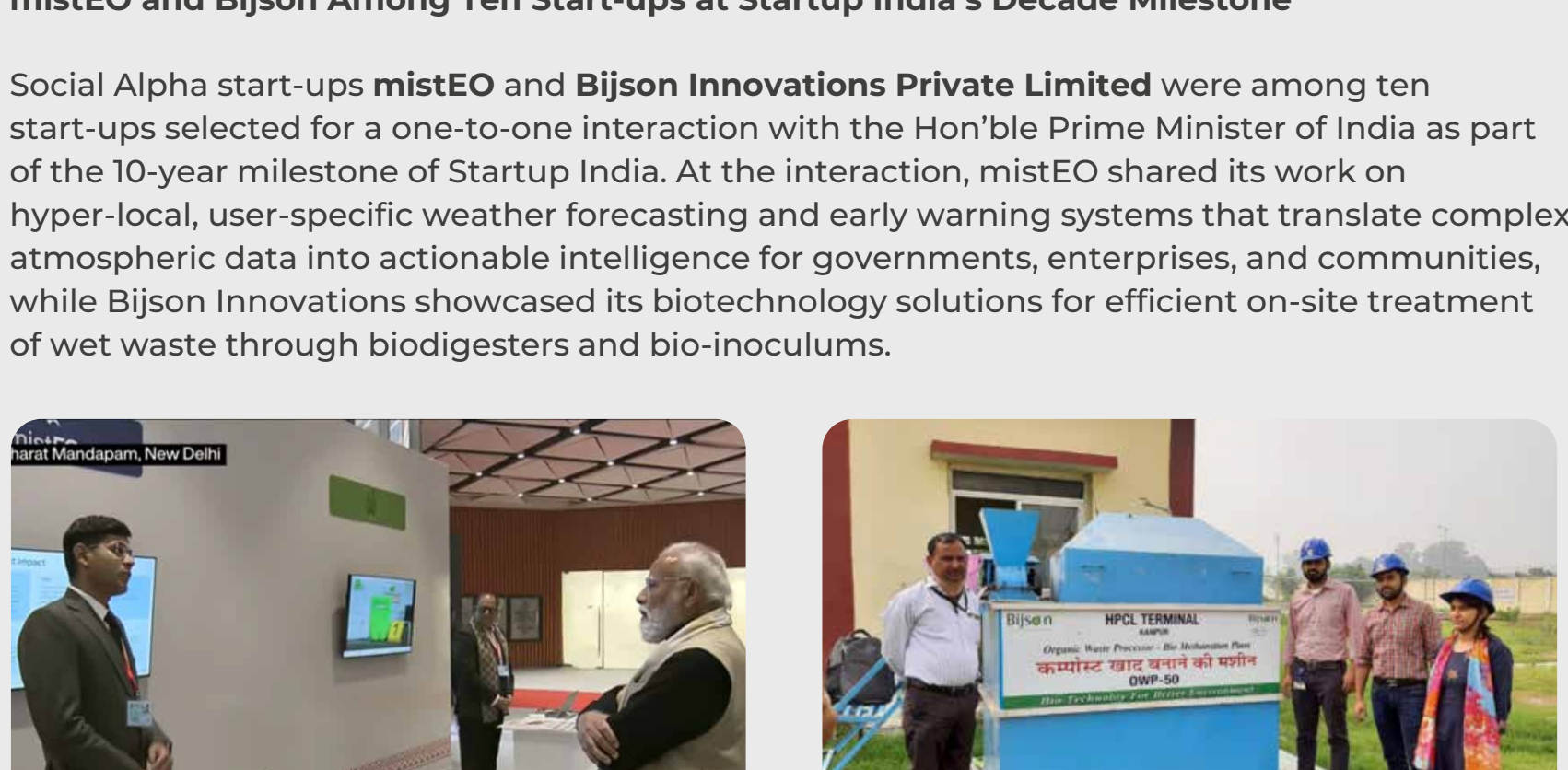


**START-UP SHOUT-OUT**

**Pixxel at the India-EU Business Forum**

Awais Ahmed, Founder and CEO of Pixxel, represented the company at the India-EU Business Forum, engaging in discussions alongside global leadership including the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

To know more about Pixxel [Click here](#)



**Sunbird Straws featured by WWF-India**

Sunbird Straws has been featured in PANDA Magazine, a publication by WWF-India, which highlights biodiversity, conservation, and sustainability initiatives across the country. The latest edition focuses on unsung contributors to ecosystem stewardship and more mindful pathways of coexistence. The feature spotlights Sunbird's work on developing fully biodegradable straws from fallen coconut leaves. By repurposing agricultural waste that might otherwise be burnt, the innovation offers a viable alternative to plastic while creating livelihood opportunities for women. Sunbird is one of nine start-ups in Social Alpha's year-long accelerator, where the focus is on moving innovations like this from pilots to wider adoption.

To read more about Sunbird Straws [Click here](#)

**Health-tech innovations from our portfolio recognised by Forbes**

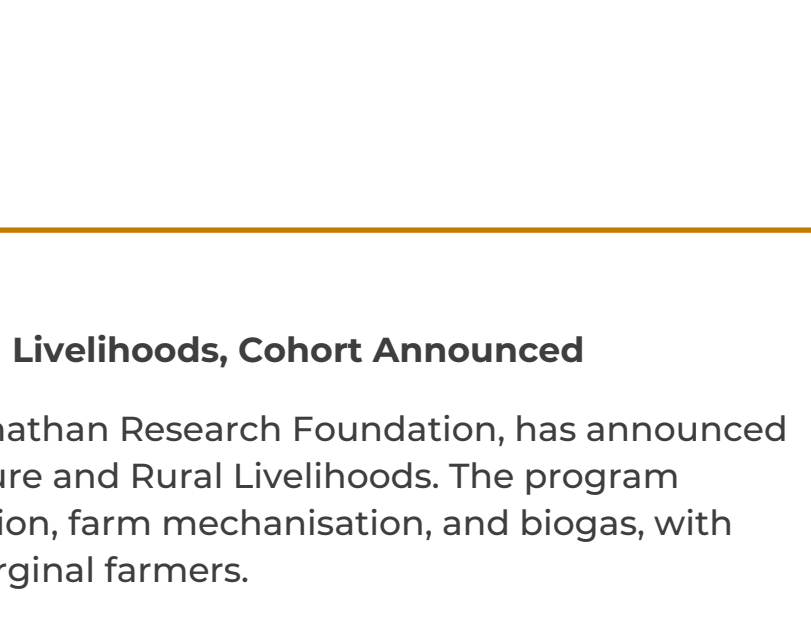
Two Social Alpha portfolio companies have been recognised in Forbes 30 Under 30.

**BrainSightAI** was featured under the AI Revolution category. Founded by Laina Emmanuel and Rimjhim Agrawal, the company recently received Software-as-a-Medical-Device certification from India's CDSCO for VoxelBox, its AI-powered brain mapping platform.

**Marbles Health** was recognised under Young Groundbreakers and Trendsetters. Founded by Ramya Yellapragada and Lakshay Sahni, the company develops clinically licensed, non-invasive neuromodulation systems to expand access to brain care. Its flagship product, EASE, India's first medically licensed portable neuromodulation device, is currently used in hospitals and supervised home-care settings, with ongoing research across mental health and neurorehabilitation.



To learn more about BrainSightAI [Click here](#)



To know more about Marbles Health [Click here](#)

**mistEO and Bijson Among Ten Start-ups at Startup India's Decade Milestone**

Social Alpha start-ups **mistEO** and **Bijson Innovations** were among the ten start-ups selected for a one-to-one interaction with the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India as part of the 10-year milestone of Startup India. At the interaction, mistEO shared its work on hyper-local, user-specific weather forecasting and early warning systems that translate complex atmospheric data into actionable intelligence for governments, enterprises, and communities, while Bijson Innovations showcased its biotechnology solutions for on-site treatment of wet waste through biodigesters and bio-inoculums.



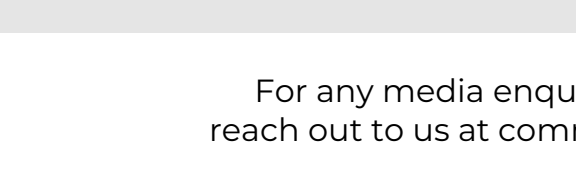
To read more about mistEO [Click here](#)



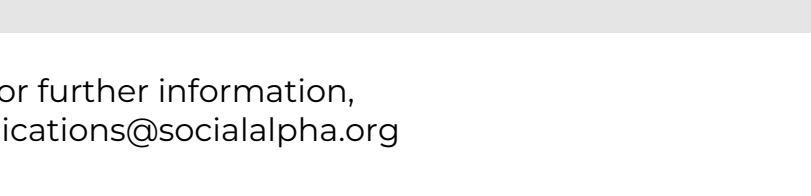
To learn more about Bijson Innovations [Click here](#)

**And the Winners Are...**

This month, two organisations from the ecosystem were recognised for building locally grounded, scalable solutions across craft-led livelihoods and clean energy systems.



**Raheja Solar Food Processing Pvt. Ltd.** was awarded the Best Young Entrepreneur Award at the Madhya Pradesh Startup Summit 2026 for building solar-powered food processing solutions that reduce post-harvest losses and enable clean-energy-led value addition for farmers, FPOs, and MSMEs.



**Samakhya Sustainable Alternatives** received the Kula Innovate Craft Revival Award 2026 in recognition of its work with pastoral communities in the Thar region, strengthening the nomadic herder value chains through the Magra Model and innovating the use of indigenous wool in green building applications.

**PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES**

**Techtonic: Innovations for Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods, Cohort Announced**

Social Alpha, in partnership with the M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, has announced the cohort for Techtonic: Innovations for Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods. The program supports science-led innovations in soil rejuvenation, farm mechanisation, and biogas, with solutions designed for the needs of small and marginal farmers.

The cohort will receive integrated support spanning development, piloting, and scale-up, including sandbox deployments, access to farmer and FPO networks, community linkages, mentorship, incubation, and pathways to development and seed capital. As part of this, start-ups will pilot and deploy their solutions across multiple regions of India, including states such as Odisha, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, and Gujarat.

We congratulate the selected cohort and look forward to working with the teams as their solutions progress from field validation to wider adoption.



**IN THE MEDIA**

**Maruti Suzuki Ushers in Inclusive Mobility with WagonR Swivel Seat: A Step Towards Providing Accessible Mobility for Senior Citizens and Persons with Disabilities**

To read the article [Click here](#)

**CERVICHECK by Pragmatech Healthcare Solutions Featured on The Better India**

To watch the video [Click here](#)

**India Discards Half its Indigenous Wool as Demand Declines and Deccani Sheep Disappear**

To read the article [Click here](#)

At Social Alpha, we are on a mission to drive Economic Growth, Social Justice and Climate Action through the power of Entrepreneurship and Market-creating Innovations.

[CONNECT WITH US](#)