

India 2nd-most preferred investment destination for CEOs: PwC survey

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India is the second-most-preferred destination among chief executive officers (CEOs) planning international investments — up from fifth spot last year, according to PwC's 29th Annual Global CEO Survey released on Tuesday. The United States is their first choice.

As many as 35 per cent of CEOs planning such investments said that they would like to do so in the US, followed by 13 per cent who expressed similar opinion of India, the United Kingdom and Germany.

The survey showed that Indian CEOs are significantly more optimistic about the country's economic growth than their international peers, with 77 per cent expressing confidence compared to 55 per cent of global leaders. As many as 57 per cent of Indian CEOs are confident of near-term revenue growth but have flagged macro-

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economic volatility and cyber risks as the top challenges over the next 12 months, the survey showed.

India's economy is estimated to grow by 7.4 per cent in FY26, up from 6.5 per cent in FY25, according to the first advance estimates of gross domestic product released by the National Statistics Office.

"Our advantage lies in the scale of our domestic market. For many industries, global-scale operations can be built by serving India alone. This is a privilege export-dependent economies lack," said T V Narendran, CEO and managing director of Tata Steel, in the survey.

Narendran added that India

needed to sharpen its competitiveness, not only for domestic consumers but also for when global markets regain stability and discipline.

The survey found that while 66 per cent of Indian CEOs were concerned about keeping pace with technology and artificial intelligence, only 36 per cent reported using AI in products, services and experiences to at least a moderate extent. It noted that those who applied AI to business functions to at least a moderate extent saw tangible revenue gains. As many as 32 per cent of Indian CEOs reported an increase in revenue, while 27 per cent reported a reduction in costs.

Companies with broader and stronger AI foundations were 2.3 times more likely to report revenue growth and 1.7 times more likely to achieve cost reductions compared to those without such foundations.

The survey drew responses from 4,454 CEOs, including nearly 50 from India.

