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IndiaAI Mission — UP MoU for 65 AI Labs and India's AI Infrastructure Push

14 January 2026

SUBJECTS COVERED

SCIENCE & TECH   ECONOMY

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✎ **WHY IN NEWS**

The IndiaAI Mission signed an MoU with UPDESCO (UP Development Systems Corporation) on January 14, 2026, to set up 65 Data and AI Labs across Uttar Pradesh — the largest state-level AI skilling ecosystem in India, as the mission accelerates its digital infrastructure buildout under its Rs 10,372 crore mandate.

INDIAAI MISSION — OVERVIEW

The **IndiaAI Mission** was approved by the Union Cabinet in **March 2024** and operationalised from **April 2024**, with a total outlay of **Rs 10,372 crore** over **five years**. It is implemented by the **Digital India Corporation (DIC)** under the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**.

CEO: Abhishek Singh (also MD and CEO, Digital India Corporation)

Seven pillars of IndiaAI Mission:

Pillar	Focus
IndiaAI Compute Capacity	10,000 GPUs public compute infrastructure
IndiaAI Innovation Centre	Frontier AI model development (multilingual LLMs)
IndiaAI Datasets Platform	National dataset repository for AI training
IndiaAI Application Development Initiative	Sector-specific AI solutions (agriculture, health, education)
IndiaAI FutureSkills	AI skilling across schools, colleges, vocational institutions
IndiaAI Startup Financing	Deep-tech AI startup funding
Safe & Trusted AI	AI governance, safety standards

JANUARY 14, 2026: UP MOU — 65 AI LABS

The IndiaAI Mission (under DIC/MeitY) signed an MoU with **UPDESCO** (Uttar Pradesh Development Systems Corporation) — a state-owned IT agency — to establish **65 Data and AI Labs** across Uttar Pradesh.

Details:

Signed by: Abhishek Singh (CEO, IndiaAI Mission) and **Anurag Yadav** (Principal Secretary, IT & Electronics, UP)

Goal: Hands-on AI training for students and professionals; India's largest state-level AI skilling ecosystem

Operational labs: Two NIELIT centres already running in **Lucknow** and **Gorakhpur**

Rollout: 65 labs across all divisions of UP, targeting ~10 lakh beneficiaries

Uttar Pradesh's participation is strategically significant: with ~24 crore people, it is India's largest state and home to 16% of India's working-age population. Integrating UP into AI skilling at scale is essential to India's demographic dividend strategy.

INDIA'S AI COMPUTE BACKBONE

GPU Procurement (10,000 GPUs): IndiaAI Mission awarded contracts to build a shared AI compute infrastructure offering affordable GPU access to startups, researchers, and government agencies. The first tranche — **~4,000 NVIDIA H100 GPUs** — was operationalised in late 2025, with the remaining GPUs to be added through 2026.

This addresses India's compute deficit: India has ~1/40th the GPU compute of the USA and ~1/10th of China per capita — a bottleneck for training large AI models domestically.

India Datasets Platform: Launched under IndiaAI, it provides access to anonymised government datasets for AI training — including agriculture (PM-KISAN beneficiary data), health (Ayushman Bharat records), and logistics (PM GatiShakti). This is India's first structured approach to making public-sector data available for AI development.

SOAR INITIATIVE — AI SKILLING AT SCALE

Skilling for AI Readiness (SOAR) was launched by **President Droupadi Murmu** at Rashtrapati Bhavan on **January 1, 2026**:

Ministry: Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

Budget: Rs 500 crore for a **Centre of Excellence in AI for Education**

Focus: Integrating AI learning into school curriculum and vocational training; preparing India's 65 crore under-35 population for AI-driven jobs

SOAR works alongside **FutureSkills Prime** (NASSCOM × MeitY platform with 10 lakh+ AI learners) and **PM VIKAS** (skill development for artisans and traditional workers).

INDIA'S AI POLICY ECOSYSTEM

Instrument	Status
IndiaAI Mission	Operational from April 2024; Rs 10,372 crore
SOAR Initiative	Launched January 1, 2026; Rs 500 crore CoE
AI Governance Framework	Draft published MeitY 2024; safety guidelines
National Data Governance Framework	Draft policy under review
DPDP Act 2023	Digital Personal Data Protection — basis for data access rules

UPSC RELEVANCE

IndiaAI Mission (April 2024; Rs 10,372 crore; DIC/MeitY; 7 pillars; 10,000 GPUs); UPDESCO; SOAR (Jan 1, 2026; Rs 500 crore CoE; President Murmu); FutureSkills Prime (NASSCOM + MeitY).

MAINS GS-3:

Science & Technology — India's AI infrastructure; compute access as geopolitical asset; AI readiness and demographic dividend; digital public infrastructure for AI.

📌 **FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA**

INDIAAI MISSION:

Approved: **March 2024** | Operational: **April 2024**

Outlay: **Rs 10,372 crore** over **5 years**

Implementing body: **Digital India Corporation (DIC)** under **MeitY**

CEO: **Abhishek Singh**

7 pillars including: Compute Capacity (10,000 GPUs), FutureSkills, Datasets Platform, Safe AI

UP × INDIAAI MOU (JAN 14, 2026):

Partner: **UPDESCO** (UP Development Systems Corporation)

Scope: **65 Data and AI Labs** across all UP divisions

Already operational: **2 NIELIT labs** (Lucknow + Gorakhpur)

SOAR INITIATIVE (JAN 1, 2026):

Full form: **Skilling for AI Readiness**

Launched by: **President Droupadi Murmu**, Rashtrapati Bhavan

Ministry: Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

Budget: **Rs 500 crore** Centre of Excellence in AI for Education

FUTURESKILLS PRIME:

Joint initiative: **NASSCOM + MeitY**

Learners: 10 lakh+ (as of 2025)

Tracks: AI, Big Data, Cloud, Cybersecurity, IoT

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

India's AI market size (2026 estimate): USD 6 billion; projected USD 28 billion by 2035

GPT-4 training used ~25,000 NVIDIA A100 GPUs; India's 10,000 H100 GPUs equivalent in compute

NITI Aayog AI strategy (#AIforAll): Published 2018 — first India AI policy document

Nasscom FutureSkills report (2025): Demand for AI-ready talent will exceed supply 3:1 by 2030

Sources: PIB, IndiaAI, The Hindu

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