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MAGAZINE NOTES

India's AI Awakening & Compute Deficit

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SCIENCE & TECH

ECONOMY

GS3

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

**Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[in linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)

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India's AI Awakening & Compute Deficit

 **Down to Earth** Chapter 3 · 1 min read ·

- The rapid debut of China's highly efficient **DeepSeek** AI model shocked India's Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) into urgent action
- India faces a severe structural deficit in foundational computing infrastructure — massive shortage of **GPUs** required to train foundational AI models
- Government swiftly invited proposals to develop domestic foundation AI models; secured subsidised access to nearly **19,000 GPUs**
- Union Commerce Minister at StartUp Mahakumbh: Indian startups focus on food delivery/fantasy sports vs Chinese startups leading in EVs, batteries, AI, robotics

IndiaAI Mission (2024)

- **\$1.25 billion programme** managed by MeitY
- Supports startups developing foundation models in Indian languages
- Status: nascent compared to China's scale

China vs India

- China's 2017 AI Development Plan: national blueprint to become world AI leader by 2030
- India in 2017: grappling with demonetisation disruptions

UPSC Angle

- **GS3:** Science & technology, AI policy, industrial competitiveness

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INDIA AI INFRASTRUCTURE:

GPUs secured: ~19,000 at subsidised rates

IndiaAI Mission budget: \$1.25 billion (MeitY, 2024)

DeepSeek: Chinese AI model that triggered India's policy response

China's AI Development Plan: launched 2017



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