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Maharashtra AI Policy 2026: India's First Ethical AI Framework

24 May 2026

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Maharashtra AI Policy 2026: India's First Ethical AI Framework

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WHY IN NEWS:

The **Maharashtra Cabinet** (under CM **Devendra Fadnavis**) approved the **Artificial Intelligence Policy 2026** in late April–May 2026, with sustained media coverage through May 22–24. The policy envisages **₹10,000 crore investment** and **1.5 lakh jobs by 2031**. Maharashtra becomes **India's first state to set up a separate Ethical AI framework**.

POLICY PILLARS

PILLAR	DETAIL
6 AI Centres of Excellence (CoE)	Sector-specific — healthcare, fintech, agritech, manufacturing, smart cities, education
5 AI Innovation Cities	Distributed regional hubs
AI Startup Venture Fund	₹500 crore (50:50 state-private)
MCAT	Maharashtra Centre for Advanced AI Training — target 2 lakh trainees
MSME AI subsidy	20% AI-implementation subsidy for 5,000 MSMEs
National Centre for Ethical and Inclusive AI Development	First-of-its-kind state-level institution

Policy targets

- Investment: **₹10,000 crore** by 2031
- Jobs: **1.5 lakh** by 2031
- Trainees through MCAT: **2 lakh**

COMPARABLE STATE AI POLICIES

STATE	POLICY
Tamil Nadu	Safe and Ethical AI Policy (2020); revised 2024
Telangana	T-Hub-led generative AI initiatives
Karnataka	Karnataka AI Policy (2022)
Maharashtra	Most comprehensive Ethical AI focus (2026)

INDIAAI MISSION — THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

PARAMETER	DETAIL
Approved by Union Cabinet	March 7, 2024
Outlay	₹10,371.92 crore over 5 years (2024–2029)
Compute target	10,000+ GPUs , scalable to 25,000

Components

- 1 **IndiaAI Compute Capacity** (GPU stack)
- 2 **IndiaAI Innovation Centre**
- 3 **IndiaAI Datasets Platform**
- 4 **IndiaAI Application Development Initiative**
- 5 **IndiaAI FutureSkills**
- 6 **IndiaAI Startup Financing**
- 7 **Safe and Trusted AI**

BHASHINI — NATIONAL LANGUAGE TRANSLATION MISSION

- Launched **July 2022** under MeitY.
- Provides Indian-language AI translation, transcription, and text-to-speech.
- Part of the Digital India BHASHINI scheme.

DPDP ACT 2023 AND THE AI STACK

PARAMETER	DETAIL
Assent	August 11, 2023
Rules	Notified in draft January 2025; final notification pending
Significant Data Fiduciary (SDF)	Designation under the Act
Data Protection Board of India (DPB)	Adjudicatory body

Pending — Digital India Act

- Under drafting since 2023.
- Will replace the **IT Act, 2000**.
- Expected to address AI, deepfakes, intermediary liability, online gaming.

ETHICAL AI PRINCIPLES (MAHARASHTRA FRAMEWORK)

PRINCIPLE	MEANING
Fairness	Non-discrimination across caste, gender, region
Transparency	Explainability (XAI)
Privacy	Data minimisation
Accountability	Human-in-the-loop
Safety	Robustness, adversarial testing

INTERNATIONAL AI GOVERNANCE LANDSCAPE

JURISDICTION	INSTRUMENT
EU	AI Act, 2024 — high-risk AI heavily regulated; employment AI = high-risk
US	AI Bill of Rights blueprint; Executive Order, October 2023
China	Algorithmic Regulations (2022); Generative AI Measures (2023)
UK	Bletchley Park AI Safety Summit (November 2023); Seoul Summit follow-up
G7	Hiroshima AI Process (2023)
GPAI	Global Partnership on AI — India joined 2020 , chaired 2024
UN	AI Advisory Body (2024)

RISK OF REGULATORY FRAGMENTATION

- State policies (Maharashtra, TN, Karnataka) vs central framework.
- Need for a **Centre–State AI Council** under NITI Aayog.
- Harmonised audit and compliance standards.

WAY FORWARD

- 1 Sovereign LLM push under the IndiaAI compute stack.
- 2 **AIRAWAT** — AI Research, Analytics and Knowledge Assimilation platform — by IIT Madras and partners.
- 3 Sector-specific AI sandboxes — RBI for fintech, IRDAI for insurance.
- 4 AI workforce **reskilling at scale**.
- 5 Final notification of DPDP Rules and roll-out of the Digital India Act.

UPSC RELEVANCE

- **GS Paper 3** — Science & Technology, IT/AI, indigenous innovation.
- **GS Paper 2** — Governance, federalism, Centre-state coordination on emerging tech.
- **Essay** — “Ethical AI: between innovation and inclusion.”

FACTS CORNER

Maharashtra AI Policy 2026 — approved late April–May 2026 by Maharashtra Cabinet

Investment target: ₹10,000 crore by 2031

Jobs target: 1.5 lakh by 2031

6 AI Centres of Excellence + 5 AI Innovation Cities

AI Startup Venture Fund: ₹500 crore (50:50 state-private)

MCAT — Maharashtra Centre for Advanced AI Training (target 2 lakh trainees)

First state with a separate Ethical AI framework

IndiaAI Mission — approved March 7, 2024; outlay ₹10,371.92 crore (5 years)

Bhashini — launched July 2022 under MeitY

DPDP Act — 2023 (assent August 11, 2023)

EU AI Act — 2024

GPAI — India joined 2020, chaired 2024

Maharashtra CM: Devendra Fadnavis

Sources: [PIB](#), [Maharashtra Government](#), [MeitY](#)

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