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Param Pragma: What IIT Delhi's New AI Supercomputer Means for India's HPC Push

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CURATED & WRITTEN BY

**Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[in linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)**ALSO FROM THE CREATOR****BharatNotes**Free UPSC notes, MCQs, PYQ analysis. **100% Free.**bharatnotes.com →**ADVERTISE****Advertise with Ujiyari**

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Param Pragya: What IIT Delhi's New AI Supercomputer Means for India's HPC Push

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✓ Every fact web-verified against primary sources

*Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated **Param Pragya**, an AI-powered high-performance computing (HPC) facility, at IIT Delhi's Sonipat campus on **August 8, 2026**, while attending the institute's **57th Convocation Ceremony** as chief guest, where over 3,000 graduating students, including 587 PhD scholars, received their degrees.*

THE EVENT

The convocation, held on the IIT Delhi campus, saw the Prime Minister present the Institute's top academic honours, the President's Gold Medal, the Director's Gold Medal, the Shankar Dayal Sharma Gold Medal, and the Perfect Ten Gold Medals, to meritorious graduates. Addressing the students, Modi urged them to "stay curious, keep learning" and to keep questioning ideas accepted without scrutiny, linking the theme directly to India's push to build a knowledge and technology base for **Viksit Bharat @2047**. The inauguration of Param Pragya at the newer Sonipat campus, rather than the main Hauz Khas campus, signals the government's intent to build fresh HPC and AI-research capacity at the institute's expansion site rather than only upgrading existing infrastructure.

WHAT PARAM PRAGYA IS

Param Pragya is described by IIT Delhi and government sources as an AI-powered high-performance supercomputing facility intended to substantially expand the institute's capacity for artificial intelligence, data science, advanced computing, and interdisciplinary research, supporting workloads such as machine learning, engineering simulation, and large-scale data analysis for faculty, PhD scholars, and start-ups. Official sources have not published detailed hardware specifications (GPU count, peak petaflop rating) for the facility as of this report; students and aspirants should treat any specific numbers circulating online with caution until IIT Delhi or the Department of Science and Technology (DST) issues a formal technical release.

THE PARAM LINEAGE

“Param” is one of India’s oldest indigenous computing brand names, built by the **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC)**, Pune, and it is worth knowing the lineage for Prelims-style recall:

SYSTEM	YEAR	APPROX. CAPACITY	NOTE
PARAM 8000	1991	Giga-scale	India’s first indigenously built supercomputer, developed after the US denied Cray supercomputer export to India
PARAM Yuva	2008	~54 teraflops	Mid-generation upgrade
PARAM Yuva II	2013	~524 teraflops	Ranked among the world’s most power-efficient systems on the Green500 list (2013)
PARAM Shivay	2019	~833 teraflops	First supercomputer built under the National Supercomputing Mission (NSM), installed at IIT (BHU) Varanasi
PARAM Pravega	2022	~3.3 petaflops	Installed at IISc Bengaluru; among India’s largest academic supercomputers
PARAM Pragya	2026	Not officially disclosed	AI-focused HPC facility, IIT Delhi’s Sonipat campus

The through-line is a **deliberate** move from general-purpose scientific computing (the early PARAM machines) toward AI/ML-optimised HPC (Param Pragya), mirroring the shift in global supercomputing priorities toward training and running large AI models.

THE NATIONAL SUPERCOMPUTING MISSION

Param Pragya’s institutional home is the **National Supercomputing Mission (NSM)**, launched in **2015** as a joint initiative of the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** and the **Department of Science and Technology (DST)**, with an original outlay of about **Rs 4,500 crore**. NSM is implemented jointly by **C-DAC, Pune** and the **Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru**, and was designed to build a network of supercomputing facilities across IITs, NITs, IISc, and national R&D laboratories, ranging from 50-teraflop systems to multi-petaflop machines. As of the most recent official figures, NSM has commissioned **37 supercomputers** with a cumulative computing capacity of **40 petaflops** across academic and research institutions nationwide.

LINKAGE TO THE INDIAAI MISSION

Param Pragya also sits within India's broader compute-capacity build-out under the **IndiaAI Mission**, approved by the Union Cabinet in March 2024 with an outlay of about **Rs 10,372 crore**. Under IndiaAI's Common Compute Facility, India had onboarded more than **38,000 GPUs** for subsidised access by start-ups, researchers, and academic institutions as of early 2026, with the government targeting an expansion toward **100,000 GPUs by the end of 2026**. Where NSM has historically built general-purpose scientific-computing capacity, IndiaAI's compute pillar is specifically about affordable, large-scale AI training and inference infrastructure, and an AI-dedicated facility like Param Pragma at a premier institute like IIT Delhi sits at the intersection of the two missions.

WHY THIS MATTERS FOR INDIA'S HPC STRATEGY

India's high-performance computing strategy rests on a self-reliance logic that dates back to PARAM 8000 itself: the original PARAM programme was born in the late 1980s after the United States denied India export access to a Cray supercomputer over dual-use and non-proliferation concerns, pushing C-DAC to build an indigenous alternative. Four decades later, the same self-reliance logic applies to AI compute, where global GPU supply, export controls on advanced chips, and cloud-compute costs make sovereign or subsidised domestic HPC capacity a strategic asset rather than a convenience. Facilities like Param Pragma, layered on NSM's institutional network and IndiaAI's compute-subsidy architecture, are positioned as the infrastructure layer underneath India's Viksit Bharat @2047 digital and technology ambitions, feeding directly into AI research output, start-up innovation, and reduced dependence on foreign cloud-compute providers for frontier research.

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS Paper 3: Science and Technology, developments and their applications and effects in everyday life; achievements of Indians in science and technology; **indigenisation** of technology; awareness in the fields of IT, computers, robotics.

Prelims focus: The Param series timeline (PARAM 8000 to Param Pragma), the implementing agencies of NSM (MeitY, DST, C-DAC, IISc), NSM's launch year and outlay, and IndiaAI Mission's outlay and GPU-capacity targets.

 FACTS CORNER, KNOWLEDGE PEDIA**PARAM PRAGYA:**

Inaugurated by: PM Narendra Modi, August 8, 2026, at IIT Delhi's Sonapat campus

Occasion: IIT Delhi's 57th Convocation Ceremony; over 3,000 graduates, including 587 PhD scholars

Purpose: AI-powered HPC facility for AI/ML research, data science, and interdisciplinary computing

THE PARAM LINEAGE (C-DAC, PUNE):

PARAM 8000 (1991): India's first indigenous supercomputer, built after the US denied Cray export access

PARAM Yuva (2008): ~54 teraflops

PARAM Yuva II (2013): ~524 teraflops

PARAM Shivay (2019): ~833 teraflops; first NSM-built system, at IIT (BHU) Varanasi

PARAM Pravega (2022): ~3.3 petaflops, IISc Bengaluru

NATIONAL SUPERCOMPUTING MISSION (NSM):

Launched: 2015; joint initiative of MeitY and DST

Implementing agencies: C-DAC, Pune and IISc, Bengaluru

Original outlay: about Rs 4,500 crore

Status: 37 supercomputers commissioned, cumulative capacity 40 petaflops

INDIAAI MISSION:

Cabinet approval: March 2024; outlay about Rs 10,372 crore

Common Compute Facility: 38,000+ GPUs onboarded (early 2026), targeting 100,000 GPUs by end-2026

Sources: PIB, PM India, The Hindu, C-DAC

Source: Param Pragya: What IIT Delhi's New AI Supercomputer Means for India's HPC Push — Ujjayi.com | Free
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