

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 556
TO BE ANSWERED ON: 07.02.2025

FUND OF FUNDS TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OF AI INFRASTRUCTURE

556. SMT. SUMITRA BALMIK:

Will the Minister of Electronics and Information Technology be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Ministry has setup a fund of funds to support development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) infrastructure in the country, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether any Startups in the field of AI have been supported by the Ministry recently, if so, the details of all such schemes under which Startups can take monetary and infrastructure support; and
- (c) whether the Ministry is taking any steps towards increasing the AI skill force in the country, if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
(SHRI JITIN PRASADA)

(a):The Government of India emphasizes the concept of 'AI for All,' aligning with the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision to democratise use of technology. This initiative aims to ensure that AI benefits all sectors of society, driving innovation and growth.

Union Cabinet has approved the IndiaAI Mission on 7th March 2024, a strategic initiative aimed at establishing a robust and inclusive AI ecosystem aligned with the country's development goals, with a strong focus on fostering AI innovation through public-private partnerships (PPPs). It aims to catalyze the AI innovation ecosystem in the country and help ensure the global competitiveness of India's AI startups, researchers and industry. The strategy is to bridge the gaps in the existing AI ecosystem viz-a-viz Compute infrastructure, Data, AI financing, Research and Innovation, targeted Skilling, developing foundational AI models, sector-specific AI projects and institutional capacity for Data to maximize the potential of AI to advance India's progress.

One of the key pillars under the IndiaAI mission is the IndiaAI Compute pillar. The IndiaAI compute pillar envisions building a high-end scalable AI computing ecosystem comprising AI compute infrastructure of 10,000 or more Graphics Processing Units (GPUs).

Towards this, IndiaAI Independent Business Division (IBD) published a Request for Empanelment (RFE) on August 16, 2024, to empanel AI services on cloud including GPUs. 19 bidders had submitted proposals to empanel their AI cloud services, out of which 10 bidders were qualified for financial bid opening.

Against the target of 10,000 GPUs outlined in the IndiaAI compute pillar, technically qualified bidders have submitted 18,693 GPUs for empanelment. It may also be noted that 15120 of the proposed GPUs for empanelment include high precision GPUs.

Out of 18,693 GPUs offered, 14,461 GPUs are already installed on the bidder's infrastructure and are available for immediate use. Additionally, there is further GPU capacity available with the bidders who were not technically qualified.

The prices quoted by the bidders are highly competitive and average discount from market prices for all GPUs is 42 %. Average discount from market prices for higher precision GPUs

it is 47%. Average rate per GPU is ₹115.85/hour and Average rate per Higher precision GPU is ₹150/hour.

To keep pace with the changes in technologies, IndiaAI enabled a continuous empanelment process inviting fresh proposals from the empaneled agencies for onboarding new GPUs and discovering any revised rates.

(b):The government has taken various steps to support startups in the electronics and IT sectors working on emerging technologies:

- **IndiaAI Startup Financing:** Under IndiaAI Mission, IndiaAI Startup Financing which aims to support and accelerate deep tech AI startups by providing streamlined access to funding for enabling futuristic AI Projects. It covers a spectrum of startup development stages starting from product development to commercialization.
- **Centres of Excellence on AI & IoT:** MeitY, along with NASSCOM has established four Centres of Excellence on AI & IoT at Bengaluru, Gurugram, Gandhi Nagar and Visakhapatnam with the objectives to enable India emerge as an innovation hub in AI & IoT through democratization of innovation and realization of prototypes. Centres of Excellence on AI & IoT connect various entities such as startups, enterprises, venture capitalists, government and academia. More than 490 startups have been enrolled, 102 societal projects have been undertaken, and 110 IPs filed.
- **Centre of Excellence (CoE) on Gaming, VFX, Computer Vision & AI:** MeitY in collaboration with Government of Telangana, STPI and Industry has initiated a Centre of Excellence (CoE) on Gaming, VFX, Computer Vision & AI named IMAGE in STPI Hyderabad. It provides resources such as mentoring, technology support and funding for Gaming, Animation, VFX, Computer Vision and AI start-ups. 75 startups are supported.
- **Startup Accelerator of MeitY for Product Innovation, Development, and Growth (SAMRIDH):** The SAMRIDH programme was launched in August 2021 for a period of three years to accelerate around 300 Startups through existing and upcoming Accelerators. At present, under SAMRIDH programme, 175 startups have been selected and accelerated through 22 selected Accelerators spread across 12 States of India.
- **TIDE 2.0 Scheme:** MeitY has initiated 'Technology Incubation and Development of Entrepreneurs (TIDE 2.0)' Scheme in the year 2019 to promote tech entrepreneurship through financial and technical support to incubators engaged in supporting ICT startups using emerging technologies such as IoT, AI, Block-chain, Robotics etc. The scheme has provisions to support 51 incubators in institutes of higher learning pan India to support 2000 tech start-ups over a period of five years.
- **GENESIS (Gen-Next Support for Innovative Startups):** MeitY has initiated the 'Gen-Next Support for Innovative Startups (GENESIS)' Scheme with the aim to strengthen the startup ecosystem in Tier-II and Tier-III cities across India. The scheme envisages scaling up about 1,600 technology startups through 65 Implementing Agencies, to discover, nurture and grow technology startups with an outlay of Rs. 490 Crore over period of five years.
- **NIDHI-Promotion and Acceleration of Young and Aspiring Technology Entrepreneurs (PRAYAS)** supports innovators and startups to technically and financially from Idea to Prototype stage.
- **NIDHI-Seed Support Program (SSP)** provides early-stage funding to the potential start-ups with promising ideas / innovations to help them graduate to the next level.
- DST has also established a **NIDHI Centre of Excellence in AI and ML** at T-Hub, Hyderabad, focusing on providing infrastructural support to innovators and startups working in the field of AI or ML.

(c): India is regarded as the skills capital in technology and Artificial Intelligence. The most reliable ranking in AI is placing India among the top countries with AI Skills, AI capabilities, and policies to use AI.

Stanford University has ranked India among the top four countries along with the US, China, and the UK in the Global and National AI vibrancy ranking based on 42 indicators.

India has a distinct advantage globally when it comes to having a workforce trained in Artificial Intelligence. This will require reskilling and upskilling, for which the Government has taken various initiatives

- **IndiaAI FutureSkills Pillar** of the IndiaAI Mission envisions to augment the number of graduate and post-graduate in AI domain by awarding IndiaAI fellowship to B.Tech and M.Tech students of all the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) recognized engineering institutions. Till now the fellowship has been awarded to 130 B.Tech and 40 M.Tech students. Further, top NIRF ranked research institutes were approached to intake new PhD scholars under IndiaAI PhD fellowship. Additionally, Under the IndiaAI FutureSkills Pillar, IndiaAI Data Labs are being setup in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities across India, to impart foundational-level courses in Data and AI such as Annotation, Data Cleaning, Data Analytics, etc. IndiaAI has established IndiaAI Data Lab in National Institute of Electronics & Information Technology (NIELIT's) Delhi centre and & ICET, Nagaland. Also Additionally, IndiaAI in collaboration with NIELIT is establishing 27 IndiaAI data labs in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities across the country, details of which are placed at Annexure I.
- **FutureSkills PRIME:** MeitY and NASSCOM are collaborating to upskill the professionals through FutureSkills Prime programme. FutureSkills PRIME is a platform comprising various online skills providers to provide digital skills training on a national scale in online mode. The programme is aimed at re-skilling/ up-skilling of IT professionals in 10 new/emerging technologies namely Artificial Intelligence, Big Data Analytics, Robotic Process Automation, Additive Manufacturing/ 3D Printing, Cloud Computing, Social & Mobile, Cyber Security, Augmented/Virtual Reality, Internet of Things and Blockchain. Besides the online mode, 40 centres of CDAC and NIELIT are also implementing the Blended Learning mode, Training of Trainers, and Government Official training programmes. So far, 8.65 Lakh candidates have enrolled/trained in various courses. Out of these, 4.34 lakh+ candidates have successfully completed their courses, which includes 1.68 lakh+ candidates who have completed training in AI and Big Data Analytics. Currently, the platform offers 157 courses in AI and Big Data Analytics. In addition, C-DAC/NIELIT Centres have trained 2994 GoT trainers in AI under the programme.
- **YuvAi initiative for Skilling and Capacity Building:** MeitY has collaborated with the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and META, to launch the “YuvAi initiative for Skilling and Capacity Building”. This program aims to bridge the
- AI talent gap in the country by empowering students and young developers aged 18-30 to leverage open-source large language models (LLMs) to address real-world challenges. It aims to build capacity in generative AI skills, utilizing open-source LLMs while fostering

AI innovation across key sectors. This goal is to train numerous developers, and entrepreneurs, contributing significantly to India's AI ecosystem across critical sectors such as healthcare, education, agriculture, smart cities, and financial inclusion.

Annexure I

List of Data & AI labs planned by IndiaAI in collaboration with NIELIT in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities across the country:

S.No.	NIELIT Centre	State/UT
1	Gorakhpur	Uttar Pradesh
2	Lucknow	Uttar Pradesh
3	Shimla	Himachal Pradesh
4	Aurangabad	Maharashtra
5	Patna	Bihar
6	Buxar	Bihar
7	Muzaffarpur	Bihar
8	Kurukshetra	Haryana
9	Ropar	Punjab
10	Haridwar	Uttarakhand
11	Bikaner	Rajasthan
12	Tezpur	Assam
13	Bhubaneswar	Odisha
14	Calicut	Kerala
15	Guwahati	Assam
16	Itanagar	Arunachal Pradesh
17	Srinagar	J&K
18	Jammu	J&K
19	Ranchi	Jharkhand
20	Imphal	Manipur
21	Gangtok	Sikkim
22	Agartala	Tripura
23	Aizawl	Mizoram
24	Shillong	Meghalaya
25	Kohima	Nagaland
26	Leh	Ladakh
27	Silchar	Assam
