

# India's AI moment gets real as celebrities, robots share space

PM inaugurates 5-day summit; Vaishnaw says India in talks with over 30 countries for a pact to curb AI misuse

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Bharat Mandapam, the 125-acre prime convention arena in New Delhi, transformed into the most sought-after address as the AI Impact Summit 2026 kicked off in New Delhi on Monday. The Day One of the fourth edition of the artificial intelligence summit — centred around the Global South — witnessed heads of states, industry captains, celebrities and thought leaders converging here to witness India's seat on the AI high-table.

The highlight of the day was the inauguration of the AI Impact

Expo by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the evening, even as thousands of visitors made their way to the destination hours earlier to check out the various aspects of AI, which promises to be a gamechanger.

This is the biggest congregation of world leaders in India, after the G20 Summit in



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, along with Union Minister of Electronics and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw and Union MoS Jitin Prasada, during the inauguration of India AI Impact Expo, at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on Monday

PHOTO: PMO VIA PTI

September 2023, turning the capital city into a fortress amid intense security drills all across. The next four days, as the summit progresses, could lead to many marquee agreements and business deals, positioning India in a new pecking order.

Modi, who arrived at the expo centre on Monday even-

ing, visited the booths of many startups and companies showcasing the latest innovations in AI. Sarvam — a startup selected under the ₹10,372 crore India AI Mission to build India's first indigenous large language model (LLM) — was one of the first booths the PM visited. Turn to Page 7 ▶

■ AI adoption needs national commitment: CEA

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'India may be first to see wider scale of voice AI'



Mati Staniszewski, cofounder and CEO, ElevenLabs, tells Aashish Aryan and Shivani Shinde in an interview how India will perhaps be the

first country in the region where wider scale of voice AI is seen.

- Tech sovereignty goes beyond just data: IBM India MD 2 ▶
- Behind every DeepSeek moment lies a decade of work: BharatGen CEO 2 ▶

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'Anthropic's India revenue doubled in past 6 months'



Anthropic's revenue run rate in India has doubled in the past six months, and the country is the second-largest user for Claude.ai globally, its

India head Irina Ghose said.

TCS, AMD to expand AI ties to take on Nvidia in India

Chipmaker AMD is deepening its India push through an expanded partnership with Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), deploying its latest rack-scale AI data centre technology in the country.

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(Top) Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Bharti Enterprises Chairman Sunil Bharti Mittal at the inauguration of India AI Impact Expo at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi on Monday. (Above) Modi with Chairman of Reliance Jio Akash Ambani

HCLTech, Reliance Jio, as well as startups including BharatGen, Shodh AI, Gnani.AI, Soket, Miko, Addverb, and Wadhvani AI were among the other stops for the PM as men and women tried to keep pace with robotic splendour.

The five-day summit, which saw serpentine queues for entry into the venue in the morning and the afternoon, will see global AI leaders such as Alphabet and Google's chief executive officer, Sundar Pichai, OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, Reliance Group chairman Mukesh Ambani, Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei, Nobel laureate and Google DeepMind CEO Demis Hassabis, and Gates Foundation chairperson Bill Gates, among others.

Setting the mood for the much awaited AI Summit, Union Electronics and Information Technology Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said in the morning that India was in talks with more than 30 countries to reach an agreement on the technical and legal solutions needed to curb the misuse of AI in the media space. He was speaking at a fireside chat with Charles Rivkin, Chairman and CEO of the Motion Picture Association.

Reiterating the government's stand on deepfakes, Vaishnaw said that it was the responsibility of social media and internet intermediaries, AI model makers and creators to ensure that AI tools are not misused.

"It is striking at the root of these institutions and trust. The social media platforms, the AI models and creators, all of us will have to take the responsibility in making sure that new technology strengthens the trust rather than belittling it and creating a break-

up of institutions without a break-up," Vaishnaw said.

Also at the venue, Union Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology Jitin Prasada said that while AI can improve learning standards for students and teachers, it must not be treated as a shortcut that weakens critical thinking.

"It's not only about access to technology, now we have to go deeper and beyond access and make sure we have scalable solutions in every aspect... We are rightly positioned for that," Prasada said.

Speaking at the event, the IT Ministry Secretary S Krishnan said that Micron, the first project approved by the government under the ₹76,000-crore India Semiconductor Mission, will begin commercial production at its Gujarat unit by the end of this month.

The company, he said, will produce high-bandwidth memory (HBM) chips, which are crucial for AI applications.

## 18% US levy may kick in this week: Commerce secy

"The effort is to finalise, close and sign the legal agreement in the month of March 2026. It is an effort, but I am not putting a deadline to it because legal agreement finalisation has certain intricacies, which have to be resolved satisfactorily," Agrawal said.

He noted that the cotton varieties India currently imports from the US would receive preferential market access under the deal. India primarily imports extra-long staple cotton from the US, alongside upland cotton.

The US mainly exports upland cotton, its principal cotton variety. The remarks follow Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal's statement last week that India would also seek concessional-duty access for garments made from yarns and cotton under the interim trade deal with Washington -- benefits similar to those secured by Bangladesh under its trade arrangement with the US.

### Digital trade exclusion

A senior commerce department official said on Monday that a digital trade chapter is not part of the interim agreement between India and the US.

While New Delhi and Washington are expected to negotiate bilateral digital trade rules, these will instead be included in the broader comprehensive trade pact, also known as the bilateral trade agreement (BTA), which is likely to take longer to conclude.

According to a White House fact sheet released last week and subsequently amended, India is expected to negotiate digital trade rules aimed at preventing the imposition of Customs duties on e-commerce electronic transmissions and to scrap its digital services tax.

However, the fact sheet was revised a day later to align with the joint statement, which said: "India will address non-tariff barriers that affect bilateral trade in priority areas. The United States and India will negotiate rules of origin that ensure that the agreed benefits accrue predominantly to the US and India."

## Mastercard, Visa rolling out passkeys for card transactions

Between FY22 and September 2025, credit card frauds totalled 244,000 cases involving about ₹1,447.27 crore, while debit and ATM card frauds stood at 94,991 cases worth ₹401.17 crore. Industry executives said social-engineering frauds, where users

