By: *TA | AP Brief*

Modi pitches India as global AI hub

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday pitched India as a central player in the global artificial intelligence ecosystem, saying the country aims to build technology at home while deploying it worldwide.

"Design and develop in India. Deliver to the world. Deliver to humanity," Modi told a gathering of some world leaders, technology executives and policymakers at the India AI Impact Summit in New Delhi.

Modi's remarks came as India — one of the fastest-growing digital markets — seeks to leverage its experience in building large-scale digital public infrastructure and to present itself as a cost-effective hub for AI innovation.

The summit was also addressed by French President Emmanuel Macron, Google CEO Sundar Pichai and U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres, who called for a $3 billion fund to help poorer countries build basic AI capacity, including skills, data access and affordable computing power.

"The future of AI cannot be decided by a handful of countries, or left to the whims of a few billionaires," Guterres said, stressing that AI must "belong to everyone."

India aims to ramp up its AI scale

India is using the summit to position itself as a bridge between advanced economies and the Global South. Indian officials cite the country's digital ID and online payments systems as a model for deploying AI at low cost, particularly in developing countries.

"We must democratize AI. It must become a tool for inclusion and empowerment, particularly for the Global South," Modi said.

With nearly 1 billion internet users, India has become a key market for global technology companies expanding their AI businesses.

India is seeking up to $200 billion in data center investment in the coming years

Last December, Microsoft announced a $17.5 billion investment over four years to expand cloud and AI infrastructure in India. It followed Google's $15 billion investment over five years, including plans for its first AI hub in the country.

Amazon has also pledged $35 billion by 2030, targeting AI-driven digitization.

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The country, however, lags in developing its own large-scale AI model like U.S.-based OpenAI or China's DeepSeek, highlighting challenges such as limited access to advanced semiconductor chips, data centers and hundreds of local languages to learn from.

The summit has faced troubles

The summit opened Monday with organizational glitches, as attendees and exhibitors reported long lines and delays, and some complained on social media that personal belongings and display items had been stolen. Organizers later said the items were recovered.

Problems resurfaced Wednesday when a private Indian university was expelled from the summit after a staff member showcased a commercially available Chinese-made robotic dog while claiming it as the institution's own innovation.

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No reason was given, though the Gates Foundation said the move was intended "to ensure the focus remains on the AI Summit's key priorities."

Gates is facing questions over his ties to late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.