# 10 Years of Digital India

**Source: PIB**

## Why in News?

On **1ˢᵗ July 2025**, **India** celebrated **10 years of Digital India**, a **flagship initiative** launched in **2015** to bridge the **digital divide** and empower citizens through **technology**.

- Over the **past decade (2015-25)**, **Digital India** has revolutionized **internet access**, **governance**, **financial inclusion**, and **digital infrastructure**, positioning India as the world's **third-largest digital economy.**

## What are Achievements of Digital India Since its Launch?

- **Digital Infrastructure:**
    - **Telecom & Internet Growth:** Between 2014 and 2025, **telephone connections** rose from **93.3 crore to 120 crore** (with **tele-density** increasing from **75.23% to 84.49%**), while **internet users** grew by **285%** and **broadband connections** surged by **1,452%.**
    - **5G Revolution:** In just **22 months**, **4.74 lakh 5G towers** were installed, covering **99.6% of districts**, while **data costs** fell sharply from **Rs 308/GB (2014)** to **Rs 9.34/GB (2022).**
    - **BharatNet for Rural India:** 2.18 lakh **Gram Panchayats** have been connected through **6.92 lakh km of optical fibre**, and **4G connectivity** now reaches **6,15,836 villages** across India.
- **Digital Finance:**
    - **Unified Payments Interface (UPI):** As of April 2025, **UPI** facilitated **1,867.7 crore transactions** worth **Rs 24.77 lakh crore**, accounting for **49% of global real-time transactions (2023)**; it is now operational in **7+ countries.**
    - **Aadhaar & Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT):** By April 2025, **142 crore Aadhaar IDs** had been generated, enabling **Rs 44 lakh crore** to be transferred via **DBT**, which removed **5.87 crore fake ration cards** and **4.23 crore duplicate LPG connections.**
    - **ONDC & GeM:** By 2025, the **Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC)** had onboarded **lakhs of sellers**, while the **Government e-Marketplace (GeM)** has over **22.5 lakh sellers** and **1.6 lakh government buyers**.
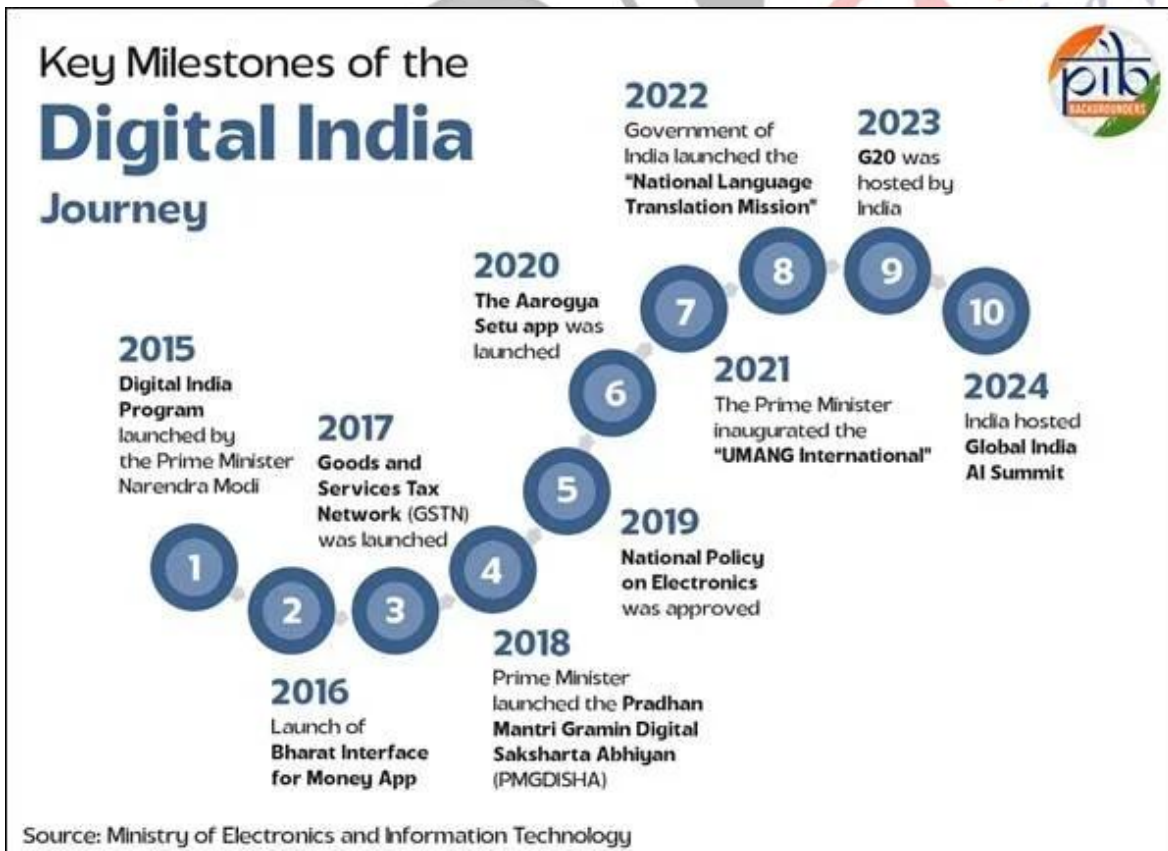
- **AI and Semiconductors:** The **IndiaAI Mission (2024–29)** has deployed over **34,000 GPUs** by May 2025 to boost **AI innovation**, **compute capacity**, **startups**, and **ethical AI frameworks**, anchored by pillars like **IndiaAI Innovation Centre**, **AIKosh**, **FutureSkills**, and **Safe & Trusted AI.**
  - The **India Semiconductor Mission** supports **chip and display manufacturing** with **50% capital assistance**; **6 projects worth Rs 1.55 lakh crore** have been approved (5 under construction).
- **Citizen Empowerment:** **Karmayogi Bharat** and **iGOT** have on boarded **1.21 crore officials**, issuing **3.24 crore learning certificates**, while platforms like **DigiLocker** (with **53.92 crore users**) and the **UMANG App** (offering **2,300+ services** in **23 languages** with **8.34 crore users**) have enhanced digital access and governance.
  - **BHASHINI** is breaking **language barriers** in digital platforms by supporting **35+ Indian languages**, offering **1,600 AI models**, and integrating with services like **IRCTC** and **NPCI**, promoting **linguistic inclusivity** in digital services.

## What is the Digital India Initiative?

- **About: Digital India initiative** was launched on **1st July 2015**, to transform India into a **digitally empowered society** and **knowledge-based economy** by strengthening **digital infrastructure**, ensuring **digital delivery of services**, and promoting **financial inclusion**.
- **Objective:**
  - **Bridging the Digital Divide**: Digital India aims to reduce the gap between **digitally empowered citizens** and those with **limited access** to technology.
  - **Ensuring Inclusive Digital Access**: It promotes **equal participation** in the digital ecosystem, enabling access to **education**, **healthcare**, and **government services** for all.
  - **Driving Economic Growth**: By leveraging **technology and innovation**, the initiative supports **nationwide economic development**.
  - **Improving Quality of Life**: It seeks to raise **living standards** by integrating **technology** into key areas of **daily life**.
- **Nine Pillars of Digital India Initiative:**
  - **Broadband Highways:** It aims to expand **high-speed internet** nationwide for better **connectivity**.
  - **Universal Mobile Access:** It ensures **mobile coverage** in remote areas to boost **digital inclusion**.
  - **Public Internet Access:** It sets up **Common Service Centres** in underserved regions to improve **affordable access** and **digital literacy**.
  - **E-Governance:** It streamlines **government services** for better **efficiency**, **transparency**, and **citizen engagement**.
  - **E-Kranti:** It delivers **government services online** via platforms like **MyGov.in** enhancing **accessibility**.
  - **Information for All:** It promotes **digitisation of records** and **open data** for innovation.
  - **Electronics Manufacturing:** It boosts **local production**, reducing imports and creating **jobs**.
  - **IT for Jobs:** It builds **youth IT skills** through missions like **Digital Literacy** and **Skill India**.
  - **Early Harvest Programs:** It addresses urgent digital needs like **online certificates**, **digital attendance**, and **public Wi-Fi**.

- **Digital India Initiatives: Aadhaar** (unique **12-digit biometric IDs**), [**BharatNet**](#) (**high-speed broadband** to rural areas), **Digital Locker** (**secure cloud storage** of documents), **BHIM UPI** (**secure digital payments**), **eSign** (**online document signing** using digital signatures), **MyGov** (**citizen participation** in governance) etc.
- **Key Milestones:**



## What are the Key Issues Associated with the Digital India Initiative?

- **Digital Divide**: India's digital growth remains uneven, with **rural internet penetration** and **digital literacy** at only **37%** (2023), highlighting stark gaps across regions and socio-economic groups.
- **Cybersecurity Threats**: Rising digital use has led to **13.91 lakh cyber security incidents** (2022), but India faces a **8 lakh cyber security professional shortage**, exposing weak **cyber defenses**.
- **Data Privacy**: Despite the **Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023**, concerns persist over **enforcement** and **data misuse**, with **61% of companies** reportedly breaching consent norms.
- **Infrastructure Bottlenecks**: **Low broadband speeds**, **patchy 5G**, and poor **fiber-optic coverage**, especially in remote areas, limit digital access; India ranks **25th** in mobile internet speed (2024).
- **Regulatory Challenges**: **Frequent policy shifts**, **overlapping jurisdictions**, and delays in **spectrum auctions** hinder 5G rollout and burden businesses with **data localization costs**.
- **Public Digital System Issues**: Platforms like **CoWIN** and **Aadhaar** face **scalability**, **accuracy**, and **fraud** challenges, especially in non-urban areas.
- **Environmental Impact**: Digital growth has increased **e-waste** from **1.01 MT (2019–20)** to **1.751 MT (2023–24)**, worsened by weak **e-waste management** and **high energy use** in data centers.

## What Measures can be Adopted to Further Strengthen the Digital India Initiative?

- **Bridging the Digital Divide**: Expand **digital infrastructure** in rural areas through **BharatNet** and **PM-WANI**, subsidize **devices**, and promote **regional language content** to boost access.
  - Mandate **assistive tech**, support **affordable internet**, and integrate **Accessible India** with **Digital India** for **marginalized groups.**
- **Enhancing Cybersecurity**: Develop a **comprehensive strategy**, expand **Cyber Surakshit Bharat**, train professionals under **Skill India**, and support **indigenous cybersecurity R&D** via **PLI schemes**.
- **Strengthening Data Privacy**: Effectively enforce the **DPDP Act, 2023**, establish **regional data protection offices**, and clarify **data localization** guidelines.
- **Promoting Digital Literacy**: Extend **PMGDISHA** to cover **cyber awareness** and **skills training**, using **community champions** for outreach.
- **E-Waste Management**: Create a national framework linking **Swachh Bharat** to **e-waste collection**, support **green startups**, and extend **PLI** to **eco-friendly tech**.
- **Integrating Digital Public Goods**: Link platforms like **Aadhaar**, **UPI**, and **DigiLocker** to improve **service delivery** and reduce **bureaucratic delays**.

## Conclusion

In its 10-year journey, **Digital India** has revolutionised service delivery, economic empowerment, and citizen participation. However, challenges like the **digital divide, cybersecurity, and data privacy** persist. With strategic reforms, inclusive infrastructure, and robust regulation, Digital India can become the **cornerstone of Viksit Bharat**, enabling equitable and sustainable digital growth.

> *Drishti Mains Question:*
>
> Q. Digital India has bridged technological gaps but faces persistent challenges. Critically analyze this statement with reference to India's digital transformation (2015–2025).

**UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)**

**Q. Consider the following: (2022)**

1. Aarogya Setu
2. CoWIN
3. DigiLocker
4. DIKSHA

**Which of the above are built on top of open-source digital platforms?**

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2, 3 and 4 only

(c) 1, 3 and 4 only

(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

**Ans: (d)**

**Q. Which of the following is/are the aim/aims of "Digital India" Plan of the Government of India? (2018)**

1. Formation of India's own Internet companies like China did.
2. Establish a policy framework to encourage overseas multinational corporations that collect Big Data to build their large data centres within our national geographical boundaries.
3. Connect many of our villages to the Internet and bring Wi-Fi to many of our schools, public places and major tourist centres.

**Select the correct answer using the code given below:**

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 3 only

(c) 2 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

**Ans: (b)**

**Q. Regarding 'DigiLocker', sometimes seen in the news, which of the following statements is/are correct? (2016)**

1. It is a digital locker system offered by the Government under Digital India Programme.
2. It allows you to access your e-documents irrespective of your physical location.

**Select the correct answer using the code given below:**

(a) 1 only

(b) 2 only

(c) Both 1 and 2

(d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Ans: (c)**

**Q.** "The emergence of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Digital Revolution) has initiated e-Governance as an integral part of government". Discuss. (2020)

**Q.** How can the 'Digital India' programme help farmers to improve farm productivity and income? What steps has the Government taken in this regard? (2015).

PDF Refernece URL: https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/10-years-of-digital-india