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The Inference | ChatGPT Kills Classroom Curiosity, the Gamble for Desi AI Chips, and More



Dear Reader,

Artificial intelligence is no longer just about breakthroughs in labs or pumping billions of dollars into data centres — it's in our hospitals, courtrooms, classrooms, and on the battlefield. At **Outlook**

Business, we believe that India needs a sharp, nuanced, and people-first lens on this transformation.

The Inference is our attempt to make sense of a world being rewritten by AI. In this newsletter, we bring you frontline narratives, boardroom insights, and data you can trust. Whether you're an investor, founder, policymaker, or just curious — this is where the signal cuts through the noise.

In this edition of the newsletter:

- ChatGPT is killing curiosity in the classroom
- Inside the desi AI chip gamble
- The hidden cost of AI dreams
- Is AI making jobs 'shittier'?

HUMANS IN THE LOOP

ChatGPT kills curiosity in the classroom

Back then, it was okay to make mistakes in homework. Teachers marked them painstakingly with notes in red circles. It was hard work. But that cycle of homework, correction, and improvement formed the beating heart of learning: repetitive and nourishing.

Cut to the present. Homework still arrives, but unerringly on time. Pages are neat. There's not a comma out of place and sentences roll out flawlessly like cars from robotised Japanese delivery lines. Just what's giving? ChatGPT or one of its AI siblings.

“It’s very common now,” sighs Deepanjali Bose, senior teacher at St. Xavier’s. “Completely unacceptable if they just copy. For tough tasks, they can surely consult AI. But the work must be their own.”

The numbers rally her point. A survey in Delhi found AI has infiltrated student life: 84% use it for research, 76% for writing, 68% for difficult subjects. Teachers across high schools and colleges agree that usage is frequent, sometimes daily.

The impact is showing. Teachers report that curiosity is declining. “Students aren’t engaging in experiential learning anymore,” laments Dr Amita David, professor at a premier women’s college in Lucknow. “Earlier, they waited eagerly for us to explain. Now they think school is just for attendance.” Doubts in class are fewer, but when asked verbally, many students fumble despite handing in “perfect” assignments. Some schools have started grading steps instead of just final answers. Verbal vivas are also back in fashion.

“It’s good if they use it for guidance or as a helping aid, but simply copying everything makes them dependent and hinders creativity,” says Meenakshi, a high-school teacher.

Detection is another headache. “Children have become too smart,” Bose admits. Teachers spot the

tell-tale signs: verbose vocabulary, awkward phrasing, that uncanny consistency.

“AI is a useful aid, not a replacement for critical thinking,” notes David.

Detection, however, is a different headache.

“Children have become too smart,” says Bose. They tweak the answers to their level, yet teachers can often spot tell-tale signs—systematic patterns, over-complicated vocabulary, phrases that don’t fit the context. Those who use AI themselves can usually sense when it’s been deployed, but none call it foolproof. Most have not even heard of detection tools like GPTZero. “Checking every sheet that way would be an impossible burden,” says Nirmala Kujur, a senior school teacher.

Teachers stress that AI literacy is essential, but guardrails are equally important. Students must be taught how to use these tools responsibly, without surrendering their own curiosity.

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FROM THE TRENCHES

Can India Make Desi AI Chips?

As the global AI chip wars escalate, India needs to carve out a niche of its own. Of course, this can't happen by competing with the shiny Blackwells or H200s made by Nvidia that are used to train large language models like those of OpenAI or Anthropic. India's real shot may be in the cheap, rugged "inference chips" that actually run everyday AI applications.

GS Madhusudan, Co-founder and CEO of InCore Semiconductors, believes this is where India's real play lies. "AI training chips are winner-takes-all and capital-heavy. But AI inference is where the market is, and where India can realistically compete," he says. Agrani Labs, an Indian firm, is already in the race to build such inference chips.

Smart home devices like speakers, televisions and fans have embedded chips that help them process a

certain level of inputs within the device. “If you put enough horsepower inside your personal device and your home device, you don't need inference to be done in the cloud provider,” Madhusudan explains.

InCore, a RISC-V design house, provides the guts and wiring — “the brains and the roads” — for such processors. India, he argues, has no shortage of design talent: “Twenty to thirty percent of the world’s chip engineers are Indian.” The gap isn’t skill, but demand.

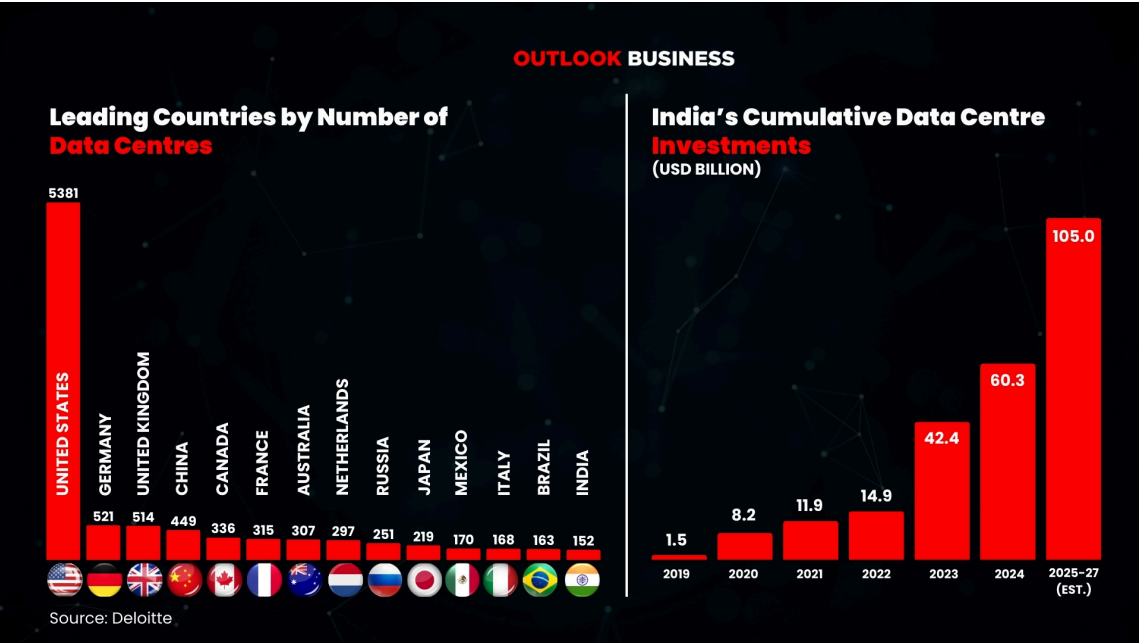
That demand, he insists, must start at home. India burns through hundreds of millions of phones, washing machines, and cars, almost all running on imported silicon. Even if 30% of data-centre chips were local, it could light up the ecosystem.

His north star is the 25-25 goal: by 2045, India should own 25% of the global market for chips costing under \$25. These humble workhorses — powering Aadhaar devices, ticket machines, fans, and IP cameras — may not make headlines, but they dominate volumes.

Mount Everest, for Madhusudan, is 2nm fabs and trillion-parameter training chips. “Don’t aim for the summit yet,” he says. “First, build base camp: design strength, domestic demand, and a global play in inference.” That’s where India’s semiconductor moment could quietly flip.

NUMBERS SPEAK

The Hidden Cost of AI Dreams



Apart from guzzling GPUs, AI devours electricity. And India's grid may soon be the bottleneck.

Already, Indian data centres burn 1.4 GW of power. By 2030, that will touch 9 GW. Deloitte says AI alone could add 40–45 TWh of demand — plus 45–50 million sq ft of new real estate. Globally, the picture is starker: US AI data-centre demand is forecast to rocket from 4 GW in 2024 to 123 GW in 2035.

The Central Electricity Authority pegs peak demand at 388 GW by 2032. To meet it, India plans nearly ₹9.2 trillion in new transmission lines over the next decade. But history nags: between 2017–22, only 85% of planned additions were delivered. Missing targets now could be catastrophic, with AI fuelling a fresh surge.

For India, it means the wires may soon matter as much as the algorithms. Chips may power AI. But the real question is: can the grid keep the lights on?

WORDS OF CAUTION

AI is making jobs 'shittier'

Artificial intelligence won't kill your job—it'll just make it worse. That's the blunt warning from Alex Hanna, co-author of *The AI Con*, who argues that the tech's much-touted productivity gains are more smoke than fire. "AI is not going to take your job but it will make

your job shittier,” Hanna [said on a recent podcast](#). From coders babysitting GitHub Copilot to journalists negotiating AI-free clauses in contracts, the reality is a creeping erosion of work quality rather than a leap in efficiency.

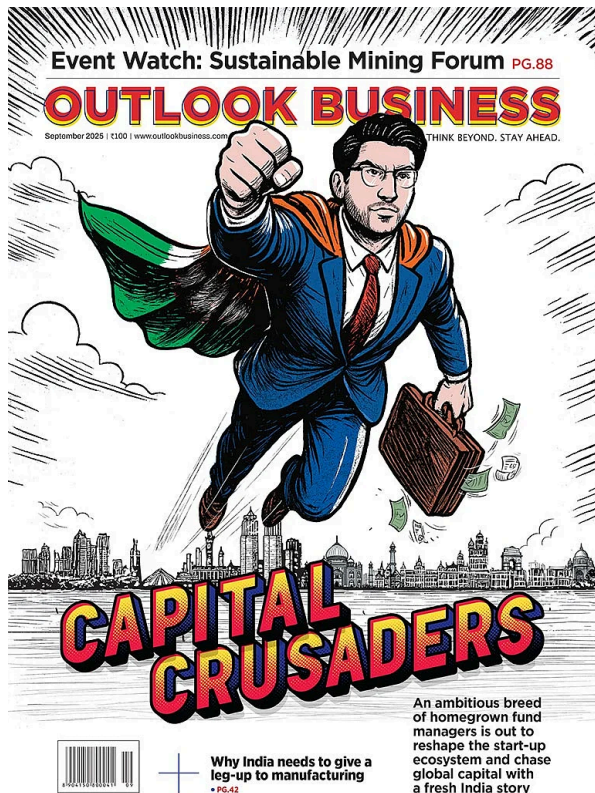
Hanna pointed to a Danish survey of 25,000 workers that found no meaningful productivity lift from AI tools; instead, employees reported more tasks being added to their plates. Meanwhile, unions are moving fast: the Writers Guild of America’s 148-day strike in 2023 baked in hard limits on generative AI, while media unions at Ziff Davis and Law360 have already fought for contract protections. “Public service workers in Pennsylvania has stood up a technology committee and has some contract language around generative AI. So this is becoming an increasingly important part to bargain around, says Hanna.

The bottom line? Corporate leaders like Sundar Pichai and Satya Nadella may be chasing efficiency stories, but on the ground, workers are wrestling with more friction, not less.

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