

SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE ON THE
OCCASION OF NATIONAL TECHNOLOGY DAY CELEBRATION

Vigyan Bhavan: May 11, 2016

1. I am happy to be amidst you this evening for the National Technology Day celebrations. This Day – eleventh of May, eighteen years ago is significant in relation to the development of India's technological capabilities. On this day in 1998, India achieved a major breakthrough in nuclear technology by successfully carrying out tests at Pokhran. This day is also associated with achievements in our missile and aviation technologies.
2. National Technology Day is symbolic of our quest for scientific inquiry and technological excellence, and a translation of that quest into an integrated scientific, societal and industrial approach. It marks not only our technological innovations but their successful commercialization making the fruits of painstaking research available to the people at large.
3. On this occasion, I compliment the dedicated scientists and technologists of our nation. It is their untiring efforts and missionary zeal that has paved the way for India's emergence as a technology power. We are now working towards a technological revolution aimed at empowering millions of our countrymen.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

4. Recognizing science and technology as a key element of economic development, we have always laid a strong focus on research and technology development. India is gradually inching towards becoming one of the leading countries in the field of scientific research. It is enviably placed amongst the top five nations in the field of space exploration. ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch

Vehicle, in its thirty-fifth flight recently, successfully launched a 1,425 kg satellite into the orbit. This was the seventh and the final satellite in the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System enabling us to enter an exclusive club of nations. I congratulate the entire community of Indian space scientists for this unique “Made in India” accomplishment. We must not rest on our laurels as this achievement should propel us to further up-grade our existing technologies. With rapid changes occurring in science education and research, only those countries having a technological edge will emerge successful in the fiercely competitive global market.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

5. Innovation is the antidote to stagnation. The youth of our country are brimming with ideas and enterprise. They are harnessing technology to find solutions to day-to-day problems of the common man. Ingenuity aided by technology can bring substantial welfare benefits. I, therefore, find the theme of the National Technology Day Function this year, which is “Technology Enablers of Start-up India”, quite relevant and appropriate.
6. The technology start-up landscape has emerged as a major driving force for Indian entrepreneurship from 2010 onwards. With an estimated 4,300 start-ups, India is the third largest start-up eco-system in the world today. A central feature of this ‘start-up movement’ is the greater involvement of our youth. In fact, 72 percent of the start-up founders in India are below the age of thirty five years. Congratulations to all of them.
7. The combined might of this talented breed of new-age entrepreneurs is there to be tapped. Their technology-cum-business models are already solving some of

the vexed problems that citizens face in their day-to-day lives. Some unique solutions introduced by them include delivery of medicines and groceries; expanding the budget hotel market; providing affordable and quick healthcare services, education and agricultural technology; and language learning. Their products are disrupting their respective industries in a positive way. Given the growing mobile penetration in the country, start-ups are beginning to come up in sectors ranging from handicrafts, education, agriculture, tourism and transportation. The jobs created by these start-ups and the markets they serve are acting as instruments of inclusive growth. I have no doubt the Indian market and the society at large has the appetite to absorb the huge potential of start-ups promises.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

8. India must have a strategy to unleash the potential of the youth to provide meaningful opportunities for their participation in the start-up system. This will help us reap the benefits of a favourable demographic transition currently underway. It will also help provide direct and effective intervention to uplift the quality of life among millions of marginalised citizens.
9. A bright scenario is emerging for the Indian start-up eco-system with the presence of favourable factors like availability of funding, platform for consolidation, suitable technology and a burgeoning domestic market. We could witness the arrival of many more start-ups in the future. The possibility of 11,000 start-ups by 2020 is not a dream but a reality.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

10. The Government is seized of the growth potential of start-ups in the country. The *Start-Up India* initiative was launched in January this year, with an action plan to promote entrepreneurship and job creation in the country. I hope to see more and more entrepreneurial talent spreading their wings and creating innovative product solutions for a growing market. The *Stand-Up India* scheme will aid in mobilizing the large reservoir of untapped potential among women and the under-privileged sections. These schemes, to my mind, have the potential to trigger another round of socio-economic transformation, similar to the initiatives of last decade when rights to job, education and food were provided, backed by legal guarantees.
11. Through initiatives like *Digital India* and *Make-in-India*, the Government is steadily building an environment conducive to start-ups. However for such an eco-system to thrive, government efforts are not enough. It requires the contribution and eager participation of stakeholders at various levels. On the occasion of the National Technology Day, I urge you all to take a pledge to make sustained efforts in this direction.
12. Before I conclude, let me say that India is gradually emerging as a world leader in many technology areas. By placing a premium on novelty and creative thought, we can spur common citizens to find innovative answers to important socio-economic challenges of our times. I appeal to all our countrymen to rise to the occasion and make innovation a way of life. I wish you all Godspeed and success in your endeavours.

Thank you.

Jai Hind.
