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'Technology-driven India is among top start-up-friendly ecosystems in the world'

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India has emerged among the top three start-up-friendly ecosystems in the world due to greater focus on innovation and modern technologies in recent years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said here on Monday.

"During the last five years, we have given great emphasis to encourage innovation and incubation," he said after distributing prizes to the winners of the Singapore India Hackathon 2019 at the IIT Research Park.

Modern technology

Modi said an ecosystem is being created for innovation at the school level. "We are now trying to give exposure to modern technologies such as machine learning, artificial intelligence and blockchain to our students as early as in 6th grade," he said.

He highlighted that programmes such as the Atal Innovation Mission, PM Research Fellowships and Start-up India Abhiyan form the foundation to promote a culture of innovation.

In India, innovation and incubation are encouraged for two big reasons — to develop easy solutions to problems, and to come out with solutions for the whole world.

"Indian solutions for global application — this is our goal and our commitment. We would also like our cost-effective solutions to be available to serve the needs of the poorest countries," he added.

Modi further said technology unites people, even across countries and continents. In this context, he welcomed Singapore Education Minister Ong Ye Kung's suggestion for a hackathon programme involving other Asian countries, too. Kung said his country is trying to link its start-ups and SMEs with their Indian counterparts and is also working on the internationalisation of the Indian technology behind Aadhaar.

Organised by the Union Ministry for Human Resource Development, All India Council for Technical Education and Singapore's **Nanyang Technological University**, the Singapore India Hackathon 2019, the second edition in this series, brought together 120 university students from Singapore and India to develop innovative solutions to shared challenges in education, healthcare and green energy. Three prizes of S\$10,000, S\$6,000 and S\$4,000 were given.

Last year, Modi had mooted the idea of the hackathon and participated in the inaugural edition in Singapore.