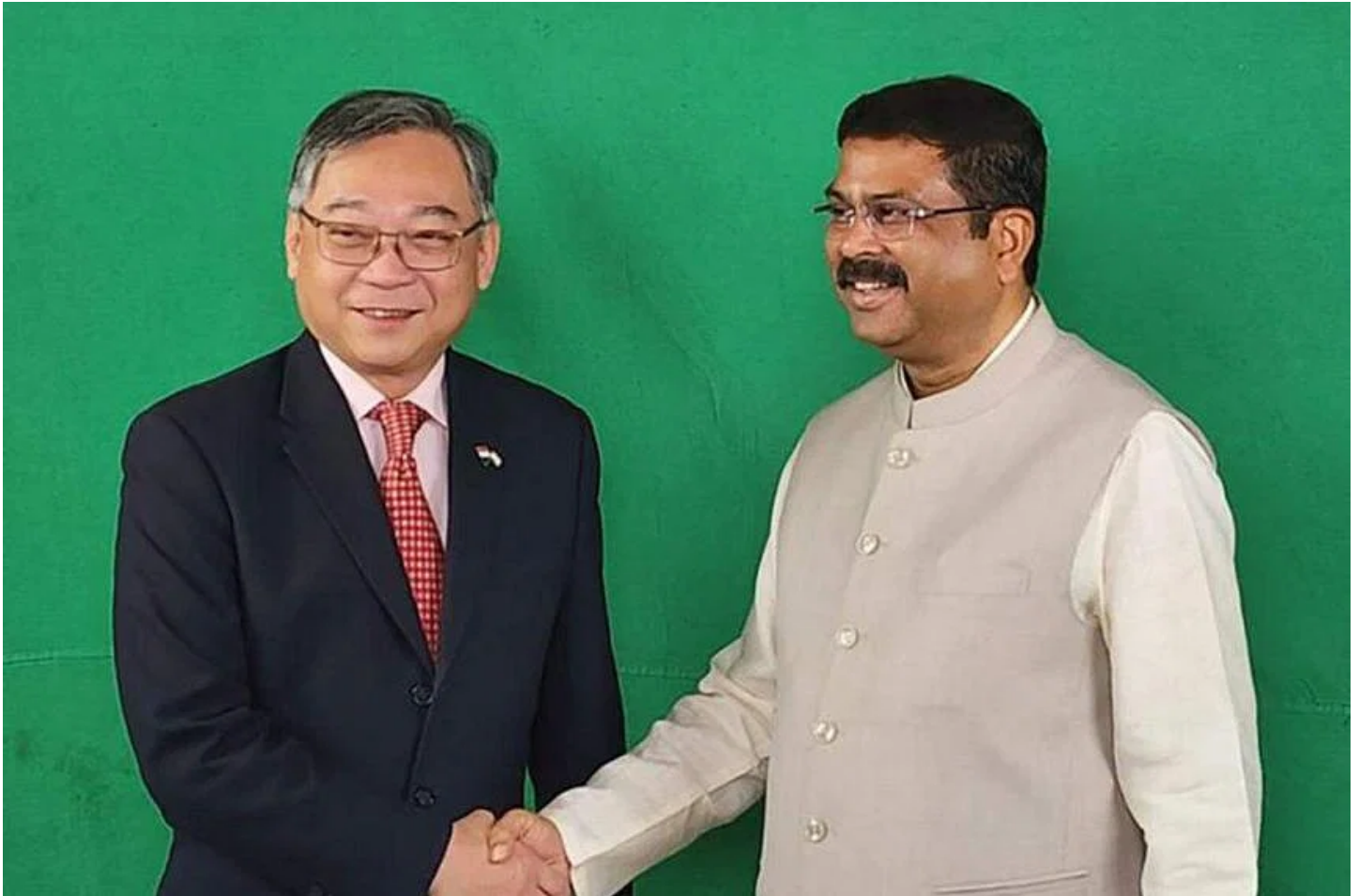


# THE STRAITS TIMES

## Skills development a key area of cooperation between Singapore and India: Gan Kim Yong



Trade and Industry Minister Gan Kim Yong (left) and Indian Minister for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Dharmendra Pradhan in New Delhi, on March 13.  
PHOTO: SGININDIA/TWITTER



**Nirmala Ganapathy**  
India Bureau Chief

UPDATED 10 HOURS AGO ▾

NEW DELHI – Trade and Industry Minister Gan Kim Yong said on Monday that Singapore and India were looking to encourage educational institutions and business associations to develop programmes for skills development with a view to facilitate knowledge-sharing between the two countries.

“India, through programmes such as Skill India, is capitalising on its demographic dividend. Like India, Singapore also invests heavily in adult learning and upskilling,” said Mr Gan at the launch event of the Singapore-India Hackathon 2023.

“And by working together, we enable our people to have more opportunities to learn from one another’s ways of thinking and doing, and this helps them to sharpen their skills, improve their competencies, and secure better jobs,” he added.

The hackathon was launched by Mr Gan and Indian Minister for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Dharmendra Pradhan. It will take place in Gandhinagar in the state of Gujarat in August.

The 2023 version of the hackathon is one of the events under India’s G-20 presidency.

“This hackathon is a part of Singapore’s and India’s cooperation in skills development, especially for our youth,” said Mr Gan, identifying skills development as a key area of cooperation between India and Singapore.

Calling Singapore a friend, Mr Pradhan said he appreciated the collaboration with Singapore in skills development.

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Underlining the importance of skills training, he noted that India has 250 million people between the ages of 15 and 25 and a workforce of 500 million.

At the hackathon, 12 student teams and 24 start-ups from both countries will race to create software solutions for fintech and climate change, among other things.

Two earlier Singapore-India hackathons, in 2018 and in 2019, saw the participation of mixed teams of university students from both countries developing software solutions for real-life problems in areas such as education and clean energy. The hackathon was not held for three years due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mr Gan said he looks forward to working with Mr Pradhan “to encourage our educational institutions and business associations to develop skilling programmes that will enable our people to keep pace with the demand for increasingly complex skills and future-proof their employability”.

Singapore has helped India develop skills centres in its cities, including the capital New Delhi and the north-eastern city of Guwahati.

More recently, Singapore and the central state of Uttar Pradesh agreed in February to work together in a range of areas, including skills training.

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The South Asian country is seeking to ensure that the millions who enter the job market are gainfully employed, and will provide them with the requisite skills.

According to the India Skills Report 2022, just 48.7 per cent of 300,000 students who were assessed were “employable”.

This year’s hackathon will also see the involvement of the Monetary Authority of Singapore.

“This is the first time students and start-ups are being mixed together. We want to see that the winners find a path to commercialisation using our ecosystem,” Mr Sopnendu Mohanty, the central bank’s chief fintech officer, told The Straits Times.

“We will be showcasing them (the winners) at the Singapore FinTech Festival.”

The hackathon will be organised by the Nanyang Technological University and the Indian Ministry of Education.

Mr Gan also met External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal during his three-day visit to India.

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