# MeitY Startup Hub and Meta launch XR Startup Program to create next Generation Startups in Extended Reality Technologies

## "Indian Startups from tier 2/ tier 3 cities, will shape the future of Technology and the internet for India and the world": MoS Rajeev Chandrasekhar

## Accelerator Program to help 40 early-stage start-ups create products and solutions based on XR technologies

## Grand Challenge will shortlist 80 innovators and select 16 for further support contributing to the advancement of the XR technology ecosystem in India

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MeitY Startup Hub (MSH), an initiative of the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), and Meta, here today, announced the launch of an accelerator programme to support and accelerate XR technology startups across India.

This initiative, XR Startup Program focuses on skilling and building technological capabilities for the metaverse, and will help shape the ecosystem for these emerging technologies, including Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) in the country.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister of State for Electronics & Information Technology, and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar has said, "It is an important day in terms of achieving Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji's vision of making the next 10 years as India's Techade - full of opportunities for young Indians. It is also an important milestone in area of Metaverse which is an important part of emerging future of the internet. I look forward to the collaboration with Meta and I hope it provides the necessary impetus towards fueling the growth of investments in future technologies in line with the government vision for making India a trillion-dollar economy by 2025."

Speaking on how the Digital India Programme launched in 2015 has transformed citizens lives, governance & democracy, catalysed India's Digital economy & created significant capabilities in emerging technologies, the Minister said "According to PM's Digital India vision, it is clear that India is no longer going to be a consumer of Technology but become a leader in Producing Emerging Technologies".



Emphasising on the potential of Indian Startups from tier 2/3 cities & how the Narendra Modi government is committed in encouraging them, the Minister further added, "Young Indian Startups, especially from tier 2/3 cities, will play a significant role in emerging tech areas like Web 3.0, blockchain, AI, Metaverse etc. and will shape the future of Technology and the internet for India and the world.

Sharing his views on the collaboration, Mr. Joel Kaplan, Vice President, Global Policy, Meta, said, "India will play a pivotal role in defining future technologies. Decisions and investments made here in India now shape global discussions on how technology can deliver more economic opportunity and better outcomes for people. It is critical that we help to create an ecosystem that will enable India's tech startups and innovators to build the foundations of the metaverse."

Mr. Kaplan noted the significant strides India has made under the Digital India Programme and maintained

that Meta is committed to partner with the Indian Government in supporting next Generation Startups in Tier 2/3 cities. "India is one of the most vibrant market due to its tech talent, entrepreneurial spirit, fast growing startup ecosystem. Technologists from Tier 2/3 cities in India will shape the future of Metaverse."

The Accelerator Program will support 40 early-stage start-ups working in XR technologies with a grant of Rs 20 lakhs each. Further, the Grand Challenge will encourage early-stage innovators in sectors like Education, Learning and Skills, Healthcare, Gaming and Entertainment, Agritech & Climate Action and Tourism & Sustainability.

The innovators will be provided support to upscale from the R&D phase to developing workable products and services. At first 80 innovators will be shortlisted to attend a bootcamp, out of which, a total of 16 innovators will be provided grants of Rs 20 lakhs each and further support to help them develop Minimum Viable Product (MVP)/ prototypes.



The Accelerator and Grand Challenge will also support start-ups and innovators with establishing customer connections, partnership opportunities and fundraising among other things.

The XR Startup Program will be implemented by four institutions - International Institute of Information Technology – Hyderabad Foundation, Hyderabad, Telangana (CIE IIIT-H); AIC SMU Technology Business Incubation Foundation (AIC-SMUTBI), Rangpo, Sikkim; Gujarat University Startup and Entrepreneurship Council (GUSEC), Ahmedabad, Gujarat and Foundation for Innovation and Technology Transfer (FITT), IIT Delhi, New Delhi. These institutions will strategically enable the startups across the length and breadth of the country creating a pan India movement in the XR technology space.

The XR Startup Program is supported by Meta's XR Programs and Research Fund, a two-year $50 million investment in programs and external research with industry partners, civil rights groups, governments, nonprofits and academic institutions.

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