



English rendering of PM's speech during inauguration of India-France Innovation Forum in Mumbai

Posted On: 18 FEB 2026 12:07PM by PIB Delhi

Your Excellency, my dear friend President Macron, innovators from both nations, greetings! Bonjour!

Today, two of the world's great innovation hubs are coming together. When we speak of India and France, our relationship is not only about innovation but also about trust and shared values. With this spirit, President Macron and I have decided to celebrate the year 2026 as the India–France Year of Innovation. This is not just a celebration; it is our shared commitment - a commitment to innovate, a commitment to lead.

Friends,

India and France have worked together across many strategic technology sectors. The trust built through this collaboration has elevated our ties to the level of a Special Global Strategic Partnership. In the years ahead, our collective creativity across every sector will help secure a brighter future for the entire world.

Friends,

Throughout thousands of years of its journey, India has innovated for human welfare in fields such as mathematics, medicine, metallurgy, and architecture. In the 21st century, India's youth are carrying forward this tradition with the motto "Innovate for Global Good." From India's vibrant startup ecosystem to our world-class research laboratories, a new can-do optimism is emerging. In just a decade, the Startup India program has made India the world's third-largest startup ecosystem. In 2014, India had only four unicorns; today, we have more than 120, with a combined valuation exceeding 350 billion dollars - nearly 300 billion euros. Today, almost every major global technology company is connected in some way with India's startups and innovations.

Friends,

Over the past decade, we have built a conducive ecosystem for innovation - from schools to industries. From Atal Tinkering Labs in schools to mentorship, scholarships, and startup capital, a strong network now exists. India today hosts one of the world's largest hackathon ecosystems. Private sector research innovation schemes provide direct support, while Startup India 2.0 mobilizes capital for deep-tech innovation.

Friends,

Our Atal Innovation Mission will complete a decade on 24 February. In this short span, it has become one of the world's largest grassroots innovation missions. More than 10,000 tinkering labs are engaging over 10 million students and innovators. The mission has also nurtured over 100 incubators and many deep-tech startups. I urge all industry leaders present here to actively engage with the Atal Innovation Mission.

Friends,

The journey of a Viksit Bharat - a developed India - needs innovation as its engine. That is why this year's budget has emphasized strengthening the innovation ecosystem. To boost content creation, labs will be established in 15,000 schools and 500 colleges. We are working in mission mode in areas such as AI, quantum technologies, biotechnology, semiconductors, and clean energy. Alongside, we will promote innovation in textiles, chemicals, sports goods, precision tools, electronics, infrastructure - in every sector.

Friends,

We take great pride in the fact that India is becoming a shining example of women-led research and innovation. Today, nearly 50 percent of startups have at least one woman director. A large number of young women are graduating in STEM fields. Whether in agriculture, healthcare, or space missions - women are leading everywhere.

Friends,

When India's speed and scale combine with France's strength, new pathways open for the world. Today, the best minds from both countries have come together. Both nations are welcoming each other's talent with open hearts. France has set a goal of hosting 30,000 Indian students by 2030. This is a remarkable effort to harness the synergy of young energy and young minds.

Friends,

The year 2026 is a truly special one for India-France relations. It will deepen people-to-people exchanges and expand industry-to-industry partnerships. Just as we are gathered here in India today, in June 2026 we will showcase India's finest tech startups in France under "Bharat Innovates 2026." These startups are creating solutions to global challenges such as health, climate, and security.

Friends,

I warmly invite leaders, CEOs, investors, and universities from France and across the world. Let us join hands with India to build a future where technology serves humanity and progress is inclusive. With this spirit, I extend my heartfelt best wishes to all of you. I am deeply grateful to my friend - for the time he has given, for the thoughtful words he has spoken, and for the trust he has expressed in the India-France relationship. As a true friend and as a symbol of the strong friendship between India and France, I convey my sincere gratitude. Thank you very much.

MJPS/VJ

(Release ID: 2229476) Visitor Counter : 558

Read this release in: Urdu , हिन्दी , Marathi , Assamese , Bengali , Punjabi , Gujarati , Telugu , Kannada