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Startup Mahakumbh unveils Startup Maha Rathi for entrepreneurs with a prize pool of upto Rs 30 Cr

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A flagship initiative to support early and growth-stage startups across 11 key sectors



The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), in collaboration with Avaana Capital, LetsVenture, Karnataka Digital Economy Mission (KDEM), IVCA, HDFC, among others, announced the launch of the Startup Maha Rathi challenge as part of the second edition of Startup Mahakumbh.

A flagship initiative aimed at empowering Indian startups through every nook and corner of the country with funding, mentorship, and strategic guidance, this challenge aligns with India's long-term vision of becoming a developed economy (Viksit Bharat) by 2047.

The challenge is set to provide access to up to a Rs 30 crore fund, mentorship from industry experts, and networking opportunities with global investors. In addition, it will also entail special awards for innovative startups from emerging states and union territories through a dedicated program.

Startup Maha Rathi – Rising towards Viksit Bharat – is designed to open doors for budding entrepreneurs across 11 key sectors, including AI & DeepTech, BioTech & Healthtech, Gaming & Sports, Fintech, Incubators & Accelerators, Mobility, Agritech, B2B & Precision Manufacturing, D2C, ClimateTech, and Defence & SpaceTech.

The programme would be awarded by Minister of Commerce and Industry and is aimed at equipping startups with the necessary resources to scale their operations and contribute to India's technological and economic advancement. Startups selected through this initiative will gain exposure to global markets through Startup India, access to mentorship from industry veterans, investor networking opportunities, and national-level recognition by DPIIT.

The competition will follow a structured, multi-phase selection process, beginning with the application launch on February 26, 2025, and culminate after a 4-step process in an exclusive live pitching finale from April 3-5, 2025, at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi. While each startup shortlisted for the grand jury round receive a guaranteed Rs 1 Lakh, top two startups from each sector will be awarded â?¹10 lakh respectively, while the next five will receive Rs 5 lakh each.

Next 5 startups in each track will gain access to Rs 3 lakh each in addition to financial grants, participating startups will receive expert guidance and investor access through a jury comprising 100+ leading VCs, angel investors, and domain specialists from Starup India and organizations such as Avaana Capital, LetsVenture, KDEM, IVCA, HDFC among many others.

Applications for Startup Maha Rathi 2025 opened on February 26, 2025, with a deadline of March 7, 2025.