GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 773
ANSWERED ON 04/02/2026

START-UPS IN TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

†773. SHRI DILESHWAR KAMAIT:

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has taken any initiatives to assist start-ups in the technology sector for attaining the status of a unicorn;

(b) if so, the details of such initiatives and the names of those start-ups which have achieved tangible scale as a result of these initiatives; and

(c) the outcomes and impact of these initiatives on the start-up ecosystem?

ANSWER
MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND EARTH SCIENCES
(DR. JITENDRA SINGH)

(a) to (c): The Government has been actively supporting creation of conducive ecosystem for innovators, entrepreneurs and startups through its various schemes and initiatives across the country.

The Government has launched the Research Development and Innovation (RDI) scheme to support cutting edge technology, deep-tech projects and startups. The main objectives of the RDI scheme are to encourage the private sector to scale up research, development and innovation (RDI), finance transformative projects, support acquisition of technologies which are critical or of high strategic importance and facilitate setting up of Deep-Tech Fund of Funds. The scheme is led by the Department of Science & Technology (DST) as the nodal department. With an outlay of Rs. 1 lakh crore in next 6 years, the RDI scheme focuses on sunrise sectors including energy security and transition, and climate action; deep-technology including quantum computing, robotics and space; artificial intelligence and its application in agriculture, health and education; biotechnology, biomanufacturing, synthetic biology, pharma, medical devices; and digital economy including digital agriculture.

Under the National Quantum Mission (NQM), DST has actively supported startups working in the domain of quantum technologies, specifically quantum computing, quantum communication, quantum sensing, and quantum materials & devices. The Mission is to support an expanding pool of quantum startups, provide them appropriate funding, give access to advanced infrastructure, and provide mentorship opportunities through partnerships with industry. Under NQM, financial support has been provided to seven startups in the different areas of Quantum Technologies.

DST is implementing the National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber Physical Systems (NM-ICPS). Under this mission, 25 Technology Innovation Hubs (TIHs) have been established in reputed academic institutions across the country. Each TIH specializes in advanced technology domains such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Machine Learning (ML), Robotics, Internet of Things (IoT), Cybersecurity, Quantum Technologies, FinTech, etc. More than 800 Startups have been benefitted under the mission.

DST through 'NIDHI' (National Initiative for Developing and Harnessing Innovations) program has extended end-to-end startup support to nurture startups from ideation to commercialization. It includes a variety of program components for Startups like PRAYAS - prototyping grant for early-stage innovative ideas, hand-holding support to startups through Technology Business Incubators, seed funding and acceleration support for rapid scaling of startup businesses.

Under the Startup India initiative launched in 2016, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has provided a platform for registering Indian startups. As of now over 2 lakh entities have been recognized as startups by DPIIT. Under Startup India initiative, the Government constantly undertakes various efforts to support startups across industries and sectors. The flagship Schemes namely, Fund of Funds for Startups (FFS), Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS) and Credit Guarantee Scheme for Startups (CGSS) support startups at various stages of their business cycle.

The Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) has been providing early-stage funding to biotech startups and entrepreneurs under Biotechnology Ignition Grant (BIG) scheme and BioNEST (Bio-Incubators Nurturing Entrepreneurship for Scaling Technologies). BIRAC has been instrumental in building a vibrant biotech innovation ecosystem in India. Through Public-Private Partnerships, it has undertaken a multitude of activities, ranging from

funding high-risk translational research, supporting nascent ideas and establishing specialised bio-incubation centres.

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has been providing financial and technical support under Technology Incubation and Development of Entrepreneurs (TIDE) and Gen-Next Support for Innovative Startup (GENESIS) schemes to Deep Tech startups in the domain of Electronics and ICT domain. Department of Space (DoS) has established Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Center (IN-SPACe), which is driving India's Space startup ecosystem.

Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX), was launched in 2018 to foster innovation & technology development in Defence & Aerospace by engaging industries including Startups/ MSMEs/ Individual Innovators, R&D institute and Academia. iDEX provides grants and other support to iDEX winners (Startups/SMEs) to carry out R&D which has potential for Indian Defence and Aerospace needs.

The S&T based entrepreneurial infrastructure and strong support mechanisms created by the Government during the last 10 years such as translational research hubs, startup incubators, research labs, fabrication facilities, generous support from ideation to Proof of Concept (POC), seed funding to acceleration, assistance in raising external funding, etc has provided seamless opportunities to students and innovators to take up entrepreneurship as career and own innovative ventures.

The initiatives of Government have significantly strengthened India’s startup and innovation ecosystem by improving access to capital, easing regulatory barriers, and expanding incubation infrastructure. They have also fostered wider economic development by promoting entrepreneurship beyond major cities. In their journey, four of the DST supported startups have reached to Unicorn status. Some of the startups supported under DST programs who have attained tangible scale are QuNu Labs, QpiAI, Ather Energy, IdeaForge, Offgrid Energy Labs, etc.

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