

# Centre finds an ally in new-economy companies

Change is in the air: Business chambers now inviting start-ups for membership

## STARTING UP A NEW PARTNERSHIP

- Via the 'Digital India' initiative, e-commerce companies are trying to tap the far-flung rural markets
- Companies like Flipkart, Snapdeal, Infibeam and Paytm have all signed memoranda of understanding with the government to reach remote parts of the country, which have so far had limited access to shops and brands
- The communications & information technology ministry too wants to connect e-commerce firms with its common service centres in villages
- As many as 100,000 CSCs have already been set up and the government plans to add another 90,000 by the end of March

KARAN CHOUDHURY & NIVEDITA MOOKERJI  
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It was a telling comment when Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said before a large gathering of 20-something and 30-something founders of start-up companies, "This is not the first time that this auditorium at Vigyan Bhavan is filled, but this is the first time that it is filled with so much energy."

Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) Secretary Amitabh Kant, the brain behind the 'Startup India campaign', added to the PM's observation: "I have not seen such dynamism in the 38 years of my career."

Modi had held a similar marathon campaign for his 'Make in India' drive in September 2014, but that was with the traditional who's who of India Inc. Even then the PM had commented on the huge crowd, but not beyond.

Industry representatives suggest that the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government at the Centre is perhaps looking at new-economy and start-up companies as a fresh ally of sorts. The long list of sops unveiled at the 'Startup India' event was part of a

package, a company executive pointed out.

Ficci President Harshvardhan Neotia described the incentives for the start-up world as "an initiative to encourage entrepreneurs who are not from business families". But he added that in February the government would organise a big week-long event with India Inc on Make



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