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Unified platform to boost startups soon: Vaishnaw

'Not Unicorn Status, But Finding Solution True Measure Of Startup Success'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union minister of railways, communication, electronics & IT, on Tuesday said that the measure of startup success is not just its unicorn status, but the satisfaction to find solution to an existing problem.

The minister was speaking at an interactive session at Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII). On the occasion, Ashwini Vaishnaw also said that the union government is soon launching Startup India Public Digital Platform that will function as a unified platform for various initiatives by the government to boost startups.

Answering a question about measure of success by a student, Vaishnaw said that the purpose of any startup by definition is identifying a problem and offering a solution. Thus, not all the business ideas could be startups and vice versa. "The

MINISTER GOES OFF STAGE TO FELICITATE DISABLED ENTREPRENEUR

● The event saw the felicitation of five entrepreneurs who have made their mark with their startups. Jignesh Shah, a person with disability, was one of the entrepreneurs. When he could not come to the stage, Ashwini Vaishnaw went off the stage to the last row and handed him the award at the event



● One of the innovations that caught the eye of the minister was a composite material that looks and behaves like plastic but is biodegradable

● At Mahatma Mandir, Vaishnaw said that the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) has the potential to become the next UPI

true measure of any startup's success is finding a solution to a problem and satisfaction derived from the process," said the minister, adding that even on those measures, India currently has 103 unicorn startups, which is higher than all of Europe combined.

Vaishnaw's event was part of Digital India week celebration which was laun-

ched by PM Narendra Modi on Monday at Mahatma Mandir in Gandhinagar. The event at EDII saw participation of industry leaders, university heads, startup founders and students. Vaishnaw also interacted with a few of the startups incubated at EDII before the event.

"We are opening up new vistas for the startups to col-

laborate with the government departments. While Indian Army launched DeFiEx platform with about 100 startups, Indian Railways has about 150 startups, India Post has 80-90 startups... The initiatives such as Digital Health Mission would have support of 2,500-plus startups," he said. "We are providing open-source platforms for the systems to grow. In the future, we will have systems for education, agriculture, logistics, etc. sectors as we have seen successful implementation of DigiLocker, Umang and UPI."

Vaishnaw hailed Gujarat as 'land of entrepreneurs' and said that he was happy to see the innovations. He termed semiconductors as the new game changers for the entire electronics sector and said that they are likely to announce the first plant establishments in August. He said that with 73,000 startups, India is the world's third largest startup ecosystem.

'New Maha govt, bullet train work on fast track'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: Ashwini Vaishnaw, Union railways, communications, electronics & IT minister, on Tuesday said with the change in the government in Maharashtra, they are hopeful of expediting the bullet train project in the state.

The minister was speaking at a press conference at Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India after his interaction with students and industry leaders on the theme of Digital India and entrepreneurship.

Answering a question on the progress of the bullet train project - which will connect Ahmedabad to Mumbai - the minister said the land acquisition is complete and work has already started on the Gujarat stretch. "In Maharashtra, work did not progress during the last government... Now, as the public has changed the government, we are hoping to speed up the work," he said re-

STATIONS IN GUJ

- Ahmedabad ● Surat
- Vadodara ● Navsari ● Rajkot
- Vapi ● Bharuch ● Bilimora
- Anand ● Nadiad ● Ankleshwar
- Udhna ● Gandhidham
- Palanpur ● Jamnagar ● Bhuj

ferring to hurdles posed by the Uddhav Thackeray-led MVA government which was recently replaced by rebel Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde-BJP coalition.

Compared to complete land acquisition in Gujarat, Dadra & Nagar Haveli UT, acquisition is about 71% in Maharashtra, the National High Speed Rail Corporation Ltd had said in June. Most importantly, there has been no land acquisition in Mumbai. The tender for Bandra-Kurla Complex and a tunnel between Thane and Virar were cancelled due to alleged political tug-of-war.

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'Bullet train completion depends on Maha progress'

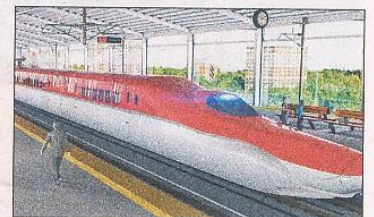
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With the new government with BJP as partner in power, the railway authorities are hopeful of expediting the land acquisition, which is the first crucial step towards establishing the high-speed railway line.

Later during the conference, he added that the project in Maharashtra would take off once the authorities acquire land (required for the project). "The overall project's completion depends on how the work progresses in Maharashtra," he said.

In another response on deadline for the ambitious project, Vaishnaw said that the trial run would take place between Surat and Bilimora - a distance of 48 km and the trial run would take place in 2026.

"For Ahmedabad to Vapi stretch - which is 352 km - we expect it to be complete by 2027. Irrespective of (the work in) Maharashtra, the work has started, and it will continue in Gujarat... The pillars are already up on a 70 km stretch, where-



as foundation is laid on a 160 km stretch," said the minister. "The work is going on at rapid speed - there are about 7-8 rivers on the route on which the bridges are being constructed. The stations are also being constructed."

He added that the length of stretch in Gujarat is adequate for bullet trains on its own, saying that the first bullet train in China had a track of 113 km. Vaishnaw also outlined a project for modernizing railways in Gujarat and said that 17 stations would be redeveloped in the state from foundation up. Ahmedabad station would be made 'world-class' at the cost of Rs 3,800 crore, he said.