

**Address by the Hon'ble President of India
Shri Ram Nath Kovind
on the Occasion of Call on by the Top Student Innovators of
Atal Tinkering Lab (Atl) Marathon 2018**

1. I wish you a warm welcome to Rashtrapati Bhavan. Today is a special day for children around the country. And it is also a special day for me since I meet and interact with children from across the country. But all of you are here not just because you are children. But because you are some of the most promising student innovators in our country.
2. I am told that you were selected as the best innovators from approximately 50,000 students from 2700 schools across the country. This is a remarkable achievement.
3. I was impressed to see your exhibits just now and it makes me wonder what young children of this nation can achieve when given the opportunity to think unconventionally. I am also filled with hope. We may be facing difficult challenges in the world today, but we also have young people, like you, willing to think differently to find the solutions to these problems.
4. The voyage for all of you has truly been a marathon. You had to cross multiple levels of selection and, in the end, you were also put through a 10-week long Student Innovator Program. At the end of this marathon, as you cross the finishing line today, you should feel proud of yourselves. All your hard work and perseverance has earned you this recognition. While you savour your success, I want you to remember that you have also now been given an opportunity. An opportunity to convert your prototypes into viable products and eventually, into a start-up. So, in a sense, your marathon may have ended, but your journey has only just begun.

5. All this would not have been possible for you, without your families and friends who have supported you at every single step. You must also not forget the role played by your teachers. They have been the GPS of your voyage. They have provided you with guidance, planning and stimulation for you to traverse this path. From students they have transformed you into young innovators. I am happy that some of your mentors are here with you today in your moment of success.

Dear Children,

6. You come from different states, speak different languages and have grown up in different cultures. Yet a common cause has united all of you. To find innovative solutions to problems faced by our society. But you won't find these answers alone by yourselves. You will have to learn to work with others, appreciate each other's ideas and understand different points of view. You have seen how thinking differently can be rewarding, but you should also remember that unless you work together you will not be able to see your ideas bear fruit.
7. As young innovators, I would like you to keep in mind one more thing. Be sensitive to the needs of those less fortunate than you. When you select the problems you wish to address or the solutions you devise, ask yourselves if it can help disadvantaged people like the differently abled or children in need. To progress as a society, we have to move forward together, and ensure that no one gets left behind.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

8. Over the past few years, I have been speaking about the importance of innovation and developing a culture of innovation. We have been hosting a festival of innovation and entrepreneurship at Rashtrapati Bhavan in collaboration with the Department of Science and Technology, and this

year we took the festival to the people. In March, I inaugurated this festival at Gandhinagar. Speaking at the function, I had emphasized that we need schools where children tinker rather than memorise and mug. We need work cultures where young talent looks up and questions – rather than looks down and nods. And we need the government to provide a facilitative environment. In this context, I am happy to see the work done by Atal innovation mission and the team at Atal tinkering lab.

9. I am told that you selected the top 50 teams and worked rigorously with them in 15 Atal Incubation Centres where these students spent an entire week immersed in various aspects of business development. This is indeed commendable. We need to provide an ecosystem where the innovations that these young minds come up with, can be nurtured. By encouraging children to tinker and innovate, we are fostering a generation who will be self-reliant and resourceful. A generation that will be job creators and not just job seekers. I hope to see these young boys and girls one day as successful entrepreneurs and for that Atal Innovation mission will have to remain engaged with them, hand holding them through their path ahead.
10. I convey my best wishes to the children whom I met today, their mentors and the entire Atal innovation family. I am sure you will carry on this good work and continue holding more such tinkering marathons in the future.

Thank You,
Jai Hind!