



AIM-iCREST: NITI Aayog

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Why in News

Recently, the **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)** has launched an incubator capabilities enhancement program '**AIM-iCREST**'.

Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) is a **flagship initiative set up by the NITI Aayog** to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country.

Key Points

- AIM-iCREST is an **Incubator Capabilities Enhancement program for a Robust Ecosystem** focused on **creating high performing Startups**.
- It has been designed to act as a **growth support for AIM's Atal and Established Incubators** across the country.

For the same, AIM has joined hands with Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Wadhvani Foundation - organizations that can lend credible support and expertise in the entrepreneurship and innovation space.

- The **AIM's incubators are set to be upscaled and provided requisite support** to foster the incubation enterprise economy, that will help them to significantly enhance their performance.
 - This will be complemented by **providing training to entrepreneurs**, through technology driven processes and platforms.
 - The focus will be on **supporting start-up entrepreneurs in knowledge creation and dissemination** as well as in developing robust and active networks.

- **AIM's Atal and Established Incubators:**
 - **Business incubators** are institutions that **support entrepreneurs in developing their businesses**, especially in initial stages.

Incubation is usually done by institutions which have experience in the business and technology world.
 - **Atal Incubation Centres:**

AIM intends to support the establishment of new incubation centres called **Atal Incubation Centres (AICs)** that would nurture innovative start-ups in their pursuit to become scalable and sustainable business enterprises.
 - **Established Incubation Centres:**
 - In recent years, academia, industry, investors, small and big entrepreneurs, government organizations, and non-governmental organizations have taken an initiative to set up incubation centres across the country.
 - AIM envisages to **upgrade these Established Incubation Centres (EICs) to world-class standards.**

Atal Innovation Mission

- AIM is Government of India's flagship initiative to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country.
- It's **objective** is to develop new programmes and policies for fostering innovation in different sectors of the economy, provide platform and collaboration opportunities for different stakeholders, create awareness and create an umbrella structure to oversee the innovation ecosystem of the country.
- **Major Initiatives:**
 - **Atal Tinkering Labs:** Creating problem solving mindset across **schools in India.**
 - **Atal Incubation Centers:** Fostering world class startups and adding a new dimension to the incubator model.
 - **Atal New India Challenges:** Fostering product innovations and aligning them to the needs of various sectors/ministries.
 - **Mentor India Campaign:** A national mentor network in collaboration with the public sector, corporates and institutions, to support all the initiatives of the mission.
 - **Atal Community Innovation Center:** To stimulate community centric innovation and ideas in the **unserved /underserved regions of the country** including Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.
 - **Atal Research and Innovation for Small Enterprises (ARISE):** To stimulate innovation and research in the MSME industry.



Source: PIB