

Indian startups, research ideas catch Germany's eye

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The town hall in Hamburg, Rathaus, is the venue of the India Week celebrations to be held here from November 2 to November 8. The week was first held in 2007 with five business events. This year, over 50 events spanning cultural, socio-political and educational fields will be held

detailing of destinations. "The event in January will help Germans make plans for the summer," said Andreas Wallblich, Messe Stuttgart's team director for communication.

Up north, the port city of Hamburg is currently hosting 20 whiz kids from India, each with a startup idea they will

showcase to potential investors at a three-day event. The entrepreneurs work on mobile platforms and are led by Gurgaon-based accelerator, GSF.

The interaction has been put together by Peter Kabel, a 'serial investor' and a frequent flyer on the Indian tech space, who has seen it metamorphose

Exchanging notes

Reel ties: The Indian Film Festival Stuttgart will be held for the 12th time in Stuttgart in July. Apart from film screenings, business, acting and dance workshops will also be held. Around 40 films, both mainstream Bollywood and also documentaries, will be screened at the festival

Spirited exchange: One of the oldest winery schools in Baden-Wuerttemberg gets young people from farming families in Nashik each year to train them in wine processing. Between 2007 and 2015, 11 students have come for the six-month training that starts towards the end of spring and ends in December.

from its outsourcing days to its current e-commerce avatar.

Kabel gives a startup spin to the make-in-India blitzkrieg – build ideas in India, and sell them in Germany. For him, India's current cash crop is its startup ideas in the digital domain that need a smart harvesting tool – one that first nurtures the idea and then gains from the yield.

He is only too aware of the stiff competition among potential investors – the Indian group is making the trip to Hamburg via Silicon Valley. "It is difficult not to look at India, by far the largest market after China. And China is not very attractive today, it is 10 years ahead of India and the wave is at its peak. In India, the wave is just building up," Kabel said.

What India thinks is also at the centre of a study tour of members of the European parliament, policy-makers and journalists to India that the

Robert Bosch Stiftung is arranging in collaboration with the European Council on Foreign Relations, this September.

They will meet experts and counterparts from various fields to discuss India's perspective and the state of affairs of Indo-European relations. This dialogue is among many other discussions, projects and exchanges the foundation is already undertaking and has planned with India over the next year.

Another partnership shaping up falls in the 'make in India' category, but one that would eventually also cater to India or Indian needs.

The Hamburg University of Technology and Symbiosis International University (SIU), Pune have partnered on 'frugal innovation' – which officials say is affordable excellence, making products affordable and customized to local

needs. "India has a distinct style of innovating that has to be understood," said Stephan Buse, deputy director at the university's Institute for Technology and Innovation Management.

Rajnish Tiwari, senior research fellow at the institute, who has been scripting the frugal innovation programme, said the partnership aims to explore the challenges of frugal innovation and the chances of it doing well and also help companies with concrete projects.

Why Pune? "Pune is not only a hub of German firms, it also gives us access to several truly innovative Indian companies as well as expertise," Tiwari said.

"Besides, there is a huge segment of an unserved market in India that is aspirational, which is an emerging market for frugal innovations," said Aravind Chinchure, chair professor of innovation and entrepreneurship at Symbiosis. He hopes the exchange of ideas and expertise at both academic and industry levels would eventually reflect in the products that Indian companies come out with in the future.

(This correspondent is in Germany on the 'Media Ambassadors India – Germany' fellowship programme of the International Media Centre and Robert Bosch Stiftung)