

India's Hackathon Revolution Is Being Engineered by a 17-Year-Old Founder

Chandigarh-based teenager builds Maximally, a global hackathon engine connecting thousands of students and global industry leaders through innovation-driven competitions.



Chandigarh, India Nov 6, 2025 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - In a country where academic entrance exams often define a student's destiny, **17-year-old Rishul Chanana** from Chandigarh has chosen a different route — one shaped by innovation, collaboration, and competition.

Rishul, who stepped away from India's demanding JEE preparation earlier this year, is the founder of **Maximally**, a fast-emerging platform described as a **global hackathon engine**. The company builds and powers large-scale hackathons — innovation-based competitions that bring together students, coders, and creators to learn through real-world problem-solving.

Building India's Hackathon Ecosystem

Founded in **June 2025**, Maximally was born out of a simple realization: India lacked a structured, scalable framework for hackathons. While the *Smart India Hackathon* set an important precedent, there was no independent ecosystem that could support organizers and students on a consistent basis.

"I wanted to make hosting a hackathon as simple as hosting a video call," Rishul said. "Organizers struggle with logistics, judging, and outreach. Maximally solves that by building a standardized, full-stack system."

In just a few months, Maximally has built a **10-member team** and hosted or co-hosted **over 20 hackathons**, reaching more than **15,000 participants** across India and abroad. Its flagship initiatives include the **Maximally AI Shipathon, Startup Makeathon, Protocol 404, Code Hypothesis, Project CodeGen**, and the **Grand Indian Hackathon Season**, which featured ten back-to-back innovation events this year.

Judges from Global Industry Leaders

Maximally's hackathons have drawn judges, mentors, and evaluators from some of the world's most recognized technology and business organizations.

Executives have represented **Apple, Google, Microsoft, Meta, Amazon, Nvidia, IBM, Oracle, Cisco Systems, Adobe, Dell Technologies, HP, SAP, Salesforce, and Atlassian**, among others. The platform has also collaborated with leaders from **Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan Chase, Mastercard, PayPal, Tesla, BMW, Toyota, McKinsey & Company, Boston Consulting Group (BCG), Bain & Company, Accenture, Deloitte, Pfizer, and Disney**.

This cross-industry participation has helped bridge the gap between student innovators and global enterprise professionals, providing participants with real-world mentorship and exposure.

Redefining How Students Learn

At its core, Maximally promotes a new model of learning known as **competition-based education** — where students learn by doing, building, and presenting rather than memorizing.

"Hackathons create a kind of learning pressure that's productive," Rishul said. "They teach teamwork, communication, time management, and creative thinking — all in 48 hours. It's learning through action, not instruction."

The idea has gained traction with student communities and educational institutions, many of which now collaborate with Maximally to incorporate hackathon-based learning formats into their academic and extracurricular ecosystems.

The Global Hackathon Engine

Maximally is now developing a **centralized digital platform** designed to simplify the process of organizing and participating in hackathons. The system will include modules for team formation, project submissions, judging automation, sponsorship management, and event analytics — essentially a single interface for the global hackathon ecosystem.

“Our vision is to make Maximally the global infrastructure for hackathons,” Rishul said. “From schools to startups to brands, anyone should be able to launch a hackathon instantly through our system.”

The Larger Vision

From a single event in Chandigarh to an international network of partnerships, Maximally represents a growing movement within India’s youth — one focused on building rather than waiting.

By combining competition, creativity, and community, Rishul aims to position India as a **global hub for innovation-driven learning**.

At 17, he may have stepped away from exams, but in doing so, he has built something far more enduring — a system that teaches young people how to think, collaborate, and create.

About Maximally

Founded in **June 2025** by 17-year-old **Rishul Chanana**, **Maximally** is a global hackathon engine that powers and scales innovation events for schools, colleges, and organizations. The company has hosted and partnered in more than 20 hackathons, reaching over 15,000 participants, with judges and mentors from 50+ global corporations.

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