Google launches online IT degrees in India

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Founder and CEO of Udacity Sebastian Thrun addresses a press conference during the launch of Android Nanodegree in India, in Bangalore on September 21, 2015

Search engine giant Google and online education company Udacity on Monday launched IT courses in India, branching outside the US to tap the country's millions of software developers scrambling for jobs.

The pair teamed with Indian conglomerate Tata to offer online technical training courses, focusing on teaching software developers to build apps

for Android, the Google-backed mobile operating system.

Costing 9,800 rupees ($148) a month, the degrees will take between six and nine months to complete, with lessons from Google instructors based in the United States. Students will get 50 percent of tuition costs back on graduation.

Google is looking to cash in on skilling up many of India's 3.6 million developers, the second largest number worldwide, while at the same time seeking more developers who can programme for Android devices.

"While India has millions of software developers, we still lag behind in creating world-class apps," Google India managing director Rajan Anandan told reporters in India's IT hub of Bangalore.

The companies will also offer 1,000 scholarships and all graduates will be invited to a job fair next year hosted by Google in India.

The launch comes as Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi heads to Silicon Valley this weekend as part of a visit to the US, seeking foreign investment in India's plethora of start-ups as well as financial tieups with US tech giants.

Modi, who will meet Facebook chief Mark Zuckerberg, is expected to reassure IT CEOs of efforts to reduce red tape and make it easier to do business in India, a massive market of 1.26 billion people.

India also boasts a large number of engineering and IT specialists who have left the country to rise to the top of the US corporate world, including Google's new chief executive Sundar Pichai and Microsoft boss Satya Nadella.

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