NIC PESHAWAR

NEWSLETTER

MARCH-APRIL 2026

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INTRODUCTION

March and April were focused on momentum, ecosystem building, and founder support at NIC Peshawar.
From the selection and onboarding of Cohort 15 to investment readiness, curriculum sessions, ecosystem networking, SME development, academic outreach, and new partnerships, the past two months reflected NIC Peshawar's continued role in helping founders build with clarity, access, and direction.
This edition highlights the key activities, collaborations, and startup stories that shaped March and April at NIC Peshawar.



MAIN EVENTS

COHORT 15

Pitching, Interviews & Onboarding.

Cohort 15 Selection & Final Pitching

NIC Peshawar concluded the final pitching round for Cohort 15, where shortlisted startups presented their ventures before an evaluation panel. Founders showcased innovative solutions, market potential, and their vision for building scalable businesses across multiple sectors. The pitching round highlighted the growing strength of the region's startup pipeline and marked the final stage of the selection process for the new cohort.

Cohort 15 Orientation & Onboarding

The orientation and onboarding sessions for Cohort 15 marked the beginning of the incubation journey for newly selected startups. Founders were introduced to the NIC Peshawar ecosystem, support structure, program roadmap, and opportunities available throughout the incubation cycle. The cohort represents a diverse mix of ideas, industries, and early stage innovation, reflecting the continued growth of the startup ecosystem in the region.

The sessions also created an opportunity for startups to connect, collaborate, and engage with the wider founder community from day one.

Need Assessment Sessions

NIC Peshawar team conducted detailed need assessment sessions with Cohort 15 startups to better understand their business stage, operational challenges, growth priorities, and support requirements. These sessions are designed to help tailor mentorship, industry linkages, training, and strategic support according to the specific needs of each startup, ensuring a more focused and impact driven incubation experience.






DREAMS
IDEAS
INNOVATION



Orbit Connect

NIC Peshawar hosted Orbit Connect in partnership with Orbit Ventures, bringing together founders, investors, mentors, industry leaders, and ecosystem partners for an invite only networking evening.
The event created a focused space for startups to engage with experienced stakeholders, share what they are building, and explore new opportunities for growth. It also strengthened connections between KP's startup community and wider national and international ecosystem players, reinforcing the value of curated networking in building founder access, visibility, and partnerships.









Seed Rise

KP Startup Ecosystem Mapping

NIC Peshawar and IMSciences formally initiated the scoping study for the SeedRise KP Fund, marking an important step toward understanding the financing needs, ecosystem gaps, and investment readiness of startups in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The collaboration aims to support a more structured view of how startups in KP emerge, grow, and access capital. By engaging incubators and key stakeholders, the study will help move the ecosystem beyond fragmented support and toward better coordination, clearer insights, and stronger pathways for startup financing.





Investment Readiness Bootcamp

NIC Peshawar hosted an Investment Readiness Bootcamp designed to help startups strengthen their fundraising preparedness and better understand the expectations of investors. The bootcamp brought together founders, investors, and ecosystem experts for focused sessions on pitching, startup positioning, and investor engagement.
Key sessions included Understanding the Investor Mindset with Kelly Pang, along with The Art of Pitching led by Fawad Hussain and Sameel Hayat from Markaz Technologies. The initiative provided startups with practical insights into building stronger narratives, communicating business value, and preparing for future investment opportunities.





Friends of Figma Peshawar Community Launch

NIC Peshawar supported the launch of the Friends of Figma Peshawar Community with its first hands on training session at the Centre of Excellence, IMSciences. Led by Amna Mughal, the session introduced participants to the fundamentals of interface design and guided them from a simple idea to their first screen. The initiative created a practical learning space for aspiring designers, students, and creatives in Peshawar to build relevant digital design skills and connect with a growing local design community.

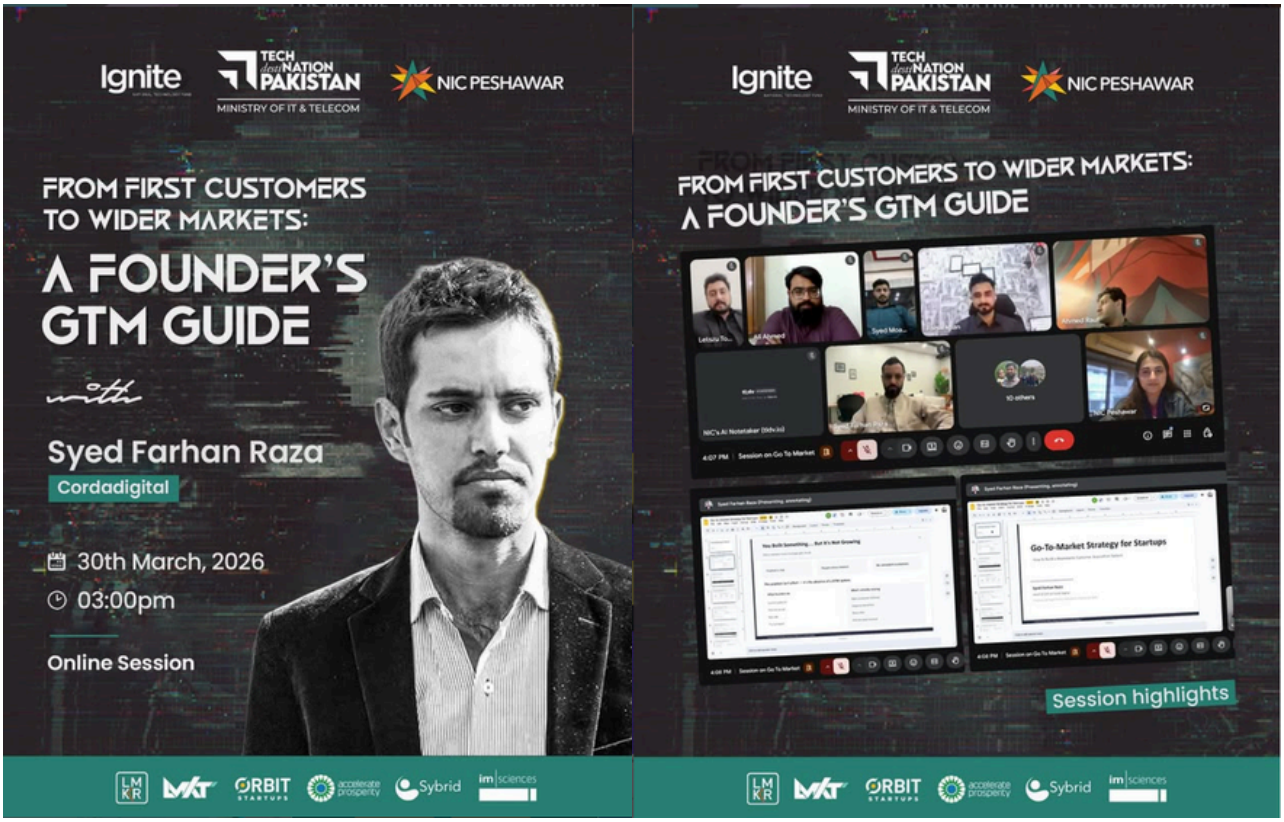




CURRICULUM & OPEN SESSIONS:

From First Customers to Wider Markets: A Founder's GTM Guide

Led by Syed Farhan Raza from Cordadigital, this session helped NIC Peshawar startups understand how to move from early customer traction to wider market growth. Founders explored how to sharpen their go to market strategy, identify the right growth channels, and scale with clearer direction.



VALUE CREATION

Sidra Jalil led a focused curriculum session on value creation, helping founders understand how to build solutions that address real market needs. The session encouraged startups to think beyond product development and focus on creating meaningful value that can stand out in the market and sustain long term growth.



HOW TO STARTUP

The How to Startup session brought together practical insights from a global acceleration perspective and founder experience. It helped early stage founders understand how to start with clarity, avoid common mistakes, and build with purpose from the beginning.



KP SME CONNECT MIDPOINT SESSION

NIC Peshawar hosted the KP SME Connect Midpoint Session in partnership with House of Pakistan, SMEDA, and Pakistan Single Window.

The session brought together SMEs, micro entrepreneurs, ecosystem leaders, and institutional stakeholders to discuss digital readiness, market access, business resilience, and growth opportunities beyond local markets.

Featuring a fireside chat with Ayub Zakori, CEO of Zakori Group, and a panel with representatives from UN Women, SMEDA, KPITB, and the Women Chamber, the session created a strong platform for learning, networking, and collaboration across KP's enterprise ecosystem.



PARTNERSHIPS, OUTREACH, AND IMPACT

Outreach session with CECOS University faculty and FYP Coordinators

As part of its ongoing outreach and academic engagement efforts, NIC Peshawar hosted a session with faculty members and FYP Coordinators from CECOS University focused on innovation oriented FYP development.
The session explored how final year projects can move beyond academic requirements and evolve into market relevant solutions with real world application. By strengthening collaboration between academia and the startup ecosystem, NIC Peshawar continues to encourage innovation driven thinking, practical problem solving, and stronger pathways for student led entrepreneurship.







MoU Signing

WITH WOMEN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

NIC Peshawar signed an MoU with the Women Chamber of Commerce to strengthen support for women led entrepreneurship in KP. The partnership focuses on creating stronger opportunities for women founders through collaboration, ecosystem access, and shared initiatives that support business growth and inclusion.

MOU WITH SARHAD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

NIC Peshawar signed an MoU with the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce to strengthen linkages between startups and industry. The partnership aims to support founders through market access, business connections, industry engagement, and practical growth opportunities, helping startups move closer to the networks they need to scale.





SPRING FESTIVAL

NIC Peshawar hosted a Spring Festival organized by Cohort 12 startups Noyyaa and Phulwari, creating a vibrant space for startups, side hustlers, small businesses, and young entrepreneurs to showcase their products and connect with the wider community.
The event featured product stalls, networking opportunities, jamming sessions, games, and community engagement activities, reflecting how startup spaces can also support creativity, collaboration, and local enterprise visibility.







Media Mentions

NIC Peshawar startups Aartec Publishing and PQC Labs were recently featured on AVT Khyber, where they had the opportunity to present their ideas to local audiences through a native media platform.
The feature helped bring founder stories closer to the communities they aim to serve, making startup innovation more accessible beyond formal ecosystem spaces. It also reflects the growing visibility of NIC Peshawar startups and the importance of regional media in highlighting local entrepreneurial talent.

