Startup Kashmir

₹**250**CR
VENTURE CAPITAL FUND

2,000
NEW STARTUPS BY 2027

12
VITAL OPERATIONAL INCUBATORS

722
REGISTERED STARTUPS

10
FOCUS SECTORS

254
WOMEN LED STARTUPS

STARTUP

'State-of-the-art laboratories will be established to support research and development activities in diverse fields'

The Innovation Hub recognizes importance of nurturing & supporting local innovators and aspiring entrepreneurs.
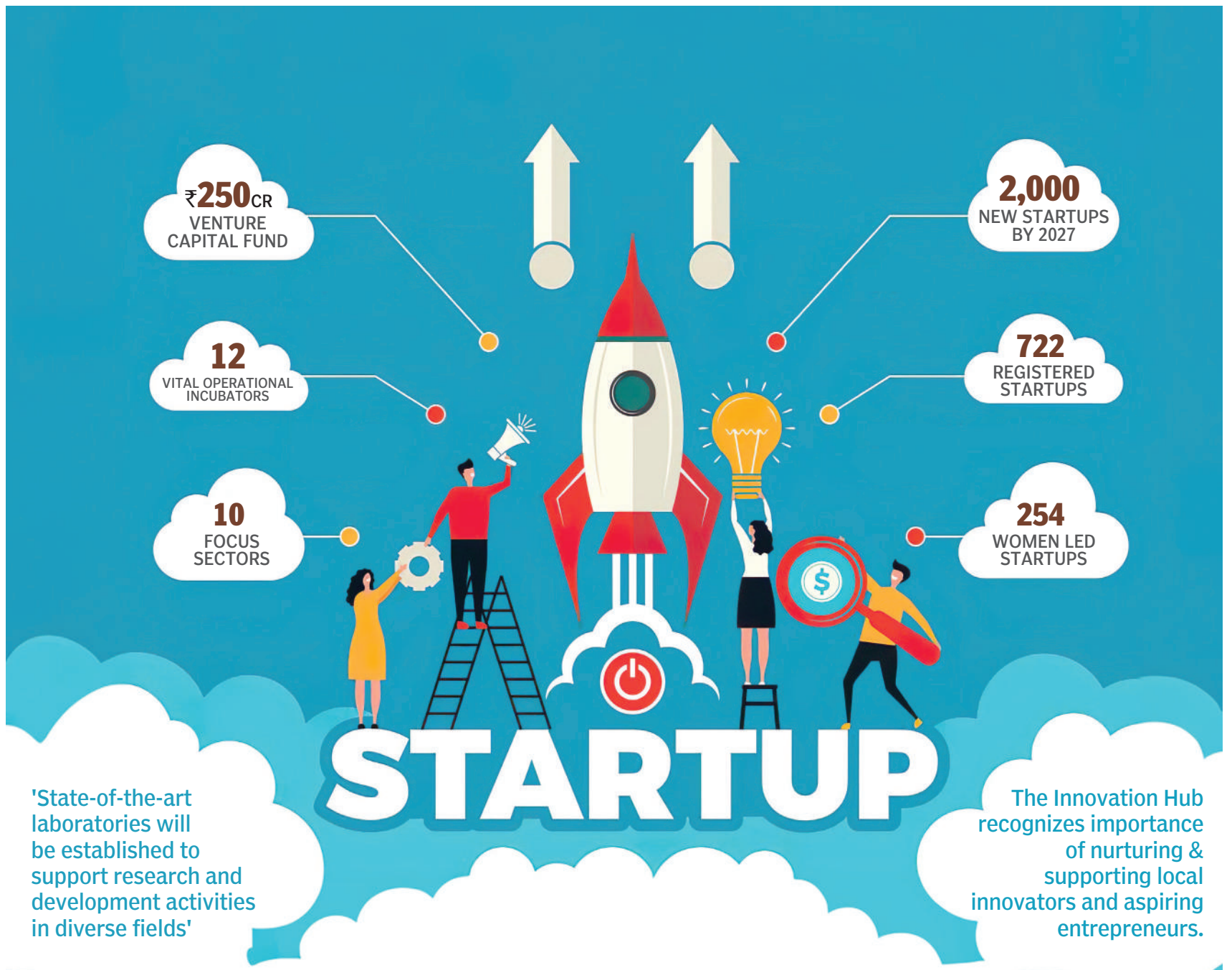
Revolutionising J&K's Startup Scene

™

READY TO TAKEOFF

On a snowy night in Paris in December 2008, two friends, Travis and Garrett, found themselves unable to find a taxi for their journey back home. In that moment, an idea dawned on them: "What if we could request a ride from a phone?" This simple but groundbreaking idea changed the way we book cabs forever and led to the founding of the company called Uber, now valued at over 120 billion USD.

As I sit in a quaint coffee shop in the heart of Srinagar, I can't help but marvel at the rapid transformations the world has undergone in the recent decades, thanks to some pioneering startups. While Uber hasn't made its way to Kashmir yet, alternatives started by the local entrepreneurs like Jugnoo and Nova cabs have become integral to our daily lives.

The young crowd, filling cafes and public spaces, buzzes with conversations about emerging technologies, innovative business models, and startup launches, these are the voices of a hopeful generation, a startup generation.

Embarking on a startup journey is like stepping into the ring as Rocky did in the famous movie Rocky Balboa starring Silvester Stallone. "It's not about how hard you hit; it's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward". That's how startups win – by taking the punches, adapting, and ultimately, emerging victorious against all odds.

For too long, Kashmir has been shrouded in narratives of conflict and struggle. But beneath the headlines, a different story pulsates – a story of resilience, of resourcefulness, of a generation yearning to rise. Our entrepreneurs are forging new paths, breaking barriers, and trying to rewrite the narrative of Kashmir.

With the Startup Kashmir magazine, we wish to embark on the journey that is collective, we wish to bring you a platform that is not just for showcasing success stories, but for celebrating the journey itself. From the seed of an idea germinating in a bustling Srinagar Cafe to the first product launch, each step is a victory. We'll chronicle the grit of bootstrapping, the thrill of pivoting, the camaraderie of co-founders, the wisdom of mentors, and the undying spirit that whispers, "We can, we will."

Within these pages, you'll meet the young tech whiz who's building an app to connect Kashmiri artisans with the world, the social entrepreneur weaving sustainability into the fabric of rural communities, entrepreneurs who are making Kashmir greener with their innovation in transportation. Their stories are diverse, their paths varied, but one thread binds them: the belief that Kashmir is not just a place, but a launchpad for dreams.

We understand the challenges. Limited resources, connectivity issues, a complex business landscape – they are hurdles, yes, but not unconquerable. This is not just a magazine; it's a movement, your armor, your guide, your compass. We'll navigate the policy maze, bridge the funding gap, share expert advice, and connect you to our vibrant network of like-minded souls.

As the inaugural flight of Startup Kashmir takes off, we invite you to board. Buckle up, dear reader, for the journey ahead will be exhilarating, challenging, and oh-so-rewarding. We'll face turbulence, encounter headwinds, but through it all, the view from the window will be breathtaking – a panorama of dreams taking flight, an ecosystem burgeoning with promise, a valley painted with the vibrant colors of entrepreneurial success.

This is Kashmir's moment. This is your moment. So, let's rise together, wings unfurled, and soar into the vast skies of opportunity. Get ready, Kashmir, we're about to takeoff!

With grit and optimism,

Shahid Ansari
Founder | Startup Kashmir

Building a Vibrant Kashmiri Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

Uniting for a Prosperous Future

Startup Kashmir is a movement dedicated to empowering the Kashmiri community and fostering a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem in the Valley. We bring together a diverse network of tech and business leaders, experts, entrepreneurs, students, and investors united by a shared vision: building a strong and economically prosperous Kashmir.

Joining Forces for Growth

We believe that the expertise and experience of successful Kashmiri professionals residing around the world hold immense potential for nurturing local talent and fueling local businesses. Our platform provides a space for these individuals to become leaders and actively contribute to our initiatives.

Become a Part of the Change

Anyone can join our dynamic and impactful community. We offer various roles to suit your interests and skillsets:

Startup Kashmir Advocate: As a core member, you'll promote Kashmir and Kashmiri businesses within your network, participate in events, and contribute innovative ideas. Your advocacy will be recognized through website listing and opportunities to expand the network.
San QR Code and fill out the form to be our member

City Mayor: Represent Startup Kashmir in your city, fostering grassroots support for the entrepreneurial community. Organize meetups to connect local Kashmiris and empower professional and business development.
San QR Code and fill out the form to be our City Mayor

Campus Mayor: Champion the Startup Kashmir philosophy and promote entrepreneurship within your educational institution, both in Kashmir and globally. Organize events like hackathons, ideathons, and workshops to cultivate a culture of innovation and identify promising talent.
San QR Code and fill out the form to be our Campus Mayor

Together, we can build a thriving future for Kashmir. Join us today and be a part of the change!

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed **citizens** can **change the world**; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

■ Margaret Mead

Embracing The Path Of Transformative Innovation

In the ever-evolving domain of technology, it is easy to get caught up in the whirlwind of awards, recognition, and market dominance. However, the essence of true innovation lies in the unwavering commitment to the craft. The pioneering spirit that propels industries forward is born from a relentless pursuit of excellence, not for the sake of accolades, but for the sheer love of creation. Greenovator Incubation Foundation (GIF), at National Institute of Technology, Srinagar, has shown relentless commitment in embracing the path of transformative Innovations across Kashmir region.

The journey towards disruptive innovation often mirrors the rigorous path of artists honing their craft. Each endeavor, no matter how small, is a stepping stone towards mastery. It's about seizing every opportunity to refine our skills, to challenge the norms, and to push beyond the boundaries of what is known.

GIF Empowering Startup Ecosystem|

As startups regularly face several demanding situations, from securing investment and attracting talent to navigating regulatory hurdles and locating product-market healthy. Greenovator Incubation Foundation (GIF), backed by the Department of Science and Technology, serves as a beacon of guide for these budding startups.

Through its Innovative Technology Business Incubator (iTBI), GIF affords crucial sources, mentorship, and networking possibilities, empowering startups to thrive in a aggressive environment.

By fostering innovation and entrepreneurship, GIF is instrumental in driving transformative exchange and propelling the startup panorama ahead.

Established under the prestigious DST NIDHI i-TBI Scheme, GIF stands as a beacon of progress, fostering innovation at the intersection of generation and sustainability.

With a steadfast dedication to driving tremendous environmental and societal effect, GIF gives unheard of offerings tailored to meet the various needs of startups.

At the heart of GIF's project is a committed group of professionals, armed with years of revel in and a ardour for technological development. Through personalised solutions and unwavering client-centricity, GIF guarantees that startups obtain the help they want to thrive in latest dynamic commercial enter-

Shahid Abbas Mir
CEO, GIF

EMPOWERING DREAMS, IGNITING INNOVATIONS, AND FUELING the future from the heart of the valley – welcome to the nexus of transformation at NIT Srinagar's Technology Business Incubator.

prise surroundings.

GIF's commitment to innovation is aware of no bounds. Constantly at the vanguard of technological evolution, GIF's team tirelessly researches and experiments with emerging technology to offer present day answers that maintain customers in advance of the curve.

Moreover, GIF is aware the urgency of well-timed delivery and prides itself on its capability to continually deliver incredible answers inside stipulated timeframes. Coupled with fee-powerful services tailored to satisfy unique wishes and budgets, GIF serves as a trusted partner in the journey towards success.

A Glance at Services Offered By GIF

As a top-quality era commercial enterprise incubator, GIF gives a comprehensive suite of services designed to empower startups at every level of their increase adventure

Mentorship and Guidance

GIF's skilled mentors and advisors provide invaluable help to startups, helping them navigate the demanding situations of launching and scaling their agencies.

Infrastructure Support

With access to state-of-the-art infrastructure, startups benefit from amenities such as office space, high-speed internet, and cutting-edge technology platforms.

Funding Assistance

GIF helps investment opportunities via its substantial community of investors, assignment capitalists, and authorities grants, making sure startups have the resources they want to flourish.

Marketing and Branding

GIF's advertising and branding experts collaborate with startups to develop robust techniques and establish compelling logo identities.

Legal and Regulatory Support

Navigating criminal and regulatory complexities is made less difficult with GIF's aid, making sure startups stay compliant and avoid pricey pitfalls.

Product Development

From idea to marketplace-prepared answers, GIF's product improvement experts manual startups via each level of the product lifecycle, turning thoughts into truth.

Greenovator Incubation Foundation (GIF) stands as a beacon of innovation, driving transformative alternate within the startup atmosphere via its unwavering dedication to excellence and sustainability.

Ready to Launch Your Startup?

Greenovator Incubation Foundation (GIF) is here to help. Contact us today to learn more about how we can help you turn your ideas into a successful business. Tel. +91 9906666664: Email. gif. info@nitsri.ac.in

CURVE ELECTRIC
Powering Success In Kashmir With Eco-Friendly E-Bikes

Syed Mohammad Burhan

SRINAGAR: The inception of Curve Electric, an e-bike venture, unfolded in the waning months of 2022, a brainchild of two visionary Kashmiri youth, Sheikh Yameen and Zubair Bhat.

Yameen, who completed his Master's in Business Administration from University of Kashmir in May 2022, had a resolute vision, saying, "I don't have to go for a job, not in the private or public sector."

Yameen fueled by a desire to address societal challenges tangibly, he, along with colleague Zubair, embarked on a quest for a venture that would bring innovation and find a solution to day-to-day transportation problems. In 2022, with a surge in tourism in Kashmir, the duo observed a concomitant increase in traffic jams and a rising trend of car purchases among the locals.

The vehicular congestion prompted contemplation, and the realization struck them and the duo came up with an alternative mode of transportation in Srinagar city.

The Srinagar smart city project, with its cycle lanes, provided the canvas for their vision to take shape.

"We came up with electric bikes, these are normal cycles fitted with lithium batteries and a motor, boasting a maximum speed of 25 km/hr—feasible for one person." Sheikh Yameen CEO Curve Electric said.

Convincing the then commissioner of Srinagar Smart City, Athar Aamir Khan was challenging but after persistent efforts, the green light was given in September 2022. The wheels of Curve Electric set in motion in December 2022.

Yameen said the launching of the venture during the harsh winter months served dual purposes—to test feasibility in challenging conditions and to evaluate the behavior of lithium batteries.

PUBLIC E-BIKE SHARING SYSTEM — heaventure.in — 9906655665

CURVE ELECTRIC, NOW A TEAM OF 25, NOT ONLY CREATED JOBS BUT ALSO EXPANDED ITS FOOTPRINT to 11-12 points within Srinagar city, with plans for further expansion into two additional towns in the Kashmir valley.

"We assembled components of the e bike from diverse manufacturers prioritized top-notch lithium batteries and assembled them locally and the end result we got is in front of all of us" "We added gloves to enhance rider comfort"

"Fast forward to January 2024, we have completed 30,000 rides covering a distance surpassing 400,000 km—exceeding the span between Earth and the moon at 384,000 km." Yameen said.

"These battery-powered two-wheelers have become a compelling alternative for commuters. The venture, born out of months of conceptualization and meticulous planning, is now weaving itself into the fabric of daily life in Srinagar."

At Curve Electric, we have achieved another commendable feat, we have been able to curb 80 metric tons of carbon emissions, equivalent to the impact of 40 fully grown trees over a year.

Curve Electric, now a team of 25, not only created jobs but also expanded its footprint to 11-12 points within Srinagar city, with plans for further expansion into two additional towns in the Kashmir valley.

Remarkably, 80% of riders are locals, and 20% are tourists, with 45% of payments made online.

With an average ride of 13 km per ride, it has surpassed the global e-bike average of 6 km per ride.

The e-bikes have ventured into challenging terrains like Koh-i-Maran and Koh-i-Soleiman, showcasing their versatility. Yet, Yameen acknowledges the need for a more robust system, improved connectivity, and precision in location points.

Beyond the wheels, the startup has initiated an environmental campaign, encouraging pledges to save the environment.

"We encourage people to take a pledge at our platform to save the environment and for each pledge, a tree will be planted after March 21 2024, solidifying our commitment to sustainability."

Zubair Bhat, Head of Operations, Curve Electric emphasized the technological prowess of their e-bikes.

"The e-bikes are GPS-enabled, running at a maximum speed of 25 km/hour and capable of covering 55 km per charge. Commuters are identified by their Aadhar card and phone number," Zubair said.

Zubair further said that one can avail the commuting facility by showing his or her Aadhar card and phone number for the first time, thereafter they will only have to use their phone number.

"Riders are charged 0.90 paise per minute and the Payments have to be made at the docking station in online or offline mode"

"We want to make it a mode of transport and people should use it on a daily basis. It is expected to be safe ride and it will save time, money, effort & above all environment"
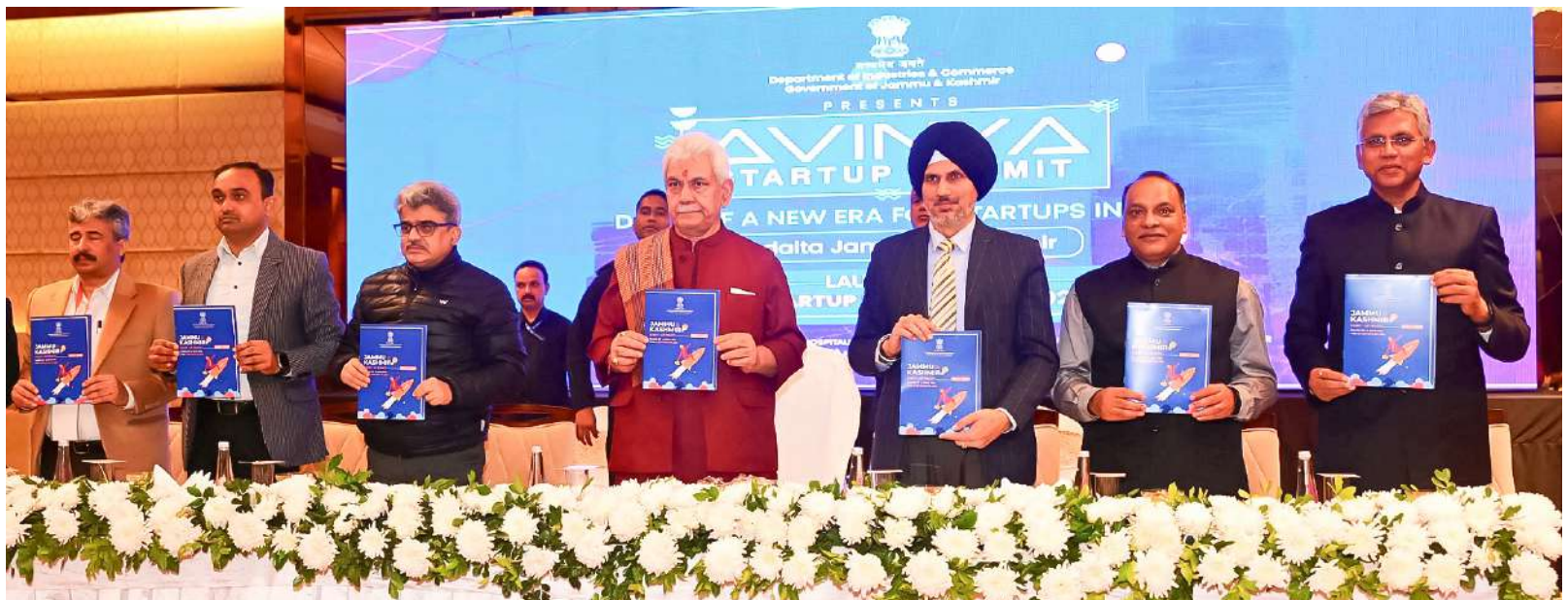
As the wheels of Curve Electric continue to spin, the cofounders expressed their gratitude to the riders, affirming that their journey has just begun.

With an eye on 2024, they plan to adapt, grow, and make their mark as a sustainable and transformative force in the realm of urban mobility.

Revolutionising J&K's Startup Scene

Policy focusing to set up 2000 startups by 2027 launched in J&K

NAZIR GANAIE

Srinagar, Feb 25: With an aim to bolster entrepreneurship and startup landscape across Jammu and Kashmir, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, led administration has launched a new Startup policy with a focus to establish 2,000 startups in the union territory by 2027—a move hailed by many quarters, especially youngsters of the region.

The 'New Jammu and Kashmir Start-up Policy- 2024-27' will also provide patent-related assistance, financial assistance for mentorship to recognized startups, facilitation for department for the promotion of industry and internal trade (DPIIT) registration and additional need-based support to startups working in diverse fields.

"I invite the potential investors from across the country to explore the unlimited possibilities present in the Union Territory and contribute to the growth journey of Jammu Kashmir," the lieutenant governor urged stakeholders at the launch of the policy at the Avinya Startup Summit in New Delhi. On February 22, the Jammu and Kashmir administrative council headed by the lieutenant governor approved the new startup policy in supersession to the startup policy notified in 2018.

The new policy provides for providing entrepreneurship facilities to students and women and support to entrepreneurs through government, private and high net-worth individuals (HNIs) for setting up startups.

Terming the launch of the new policy as a "giant leap for startups and innovators", the lieutenant governor said it has been meticulously drafted to establish 2,000 startups in the Union Territory by 2027, underscoring the commitment of the administration to foster a dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem. Highlighting the key features of the new J&K Start-Up Policy, he said the policy aims to set up a Rs 250 crore Venture Capital Fund, with an initial infusion of Rs 25 crore from his administration.

"This fund will provide crucial support for growth, early-stage financial handholding, and it will encourage growth of viable business models," he noted.

Sinha reiterated the commitment of the administration to establish and empower new incubation centres and seed funding through the J&K Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) for developing prototypes of innovative products and providing additional support to female entrepreneurs through the new startup policy. Addressing entrepreneurs and innovators on the occasion, the lieutenant governor called for collective action to build a dynamic economic environment in the UT where business can thrive, investment can prosper and entrepreneurs can actualize their aspirations. He also talked about the challenges and growth opportunities in different sectors in Jammu and Kashmir.

Startup Landscape in J&K

The Union Territory has 722 registered startups, with a notable focus on gender inclusivity, boasting 254 women-led startups. The Jammu & Kashmir startup ecosystem exhibits a diverse landscape, with construction and engineering emerging as a key player, constituting 49 per cent of the total startups, followed by Skill Development (12 per cent), Oil & Gas Transportation (12 per cent), IT Consulting (8 per cent), Business Support Services (7 per cent), Food Processing (6 per cent), and Agri-Tech (5 per cent). This showcases the entrepreneurial diversity and the presence of startups across various industries, he said. The Lt Governor said the policy reflects a comprehensive survey on government support, incubator collaboration and policy requirements.

Notably, 69 per cent of startups seek support for Marketing and Branding, while the collaboration with incubators is at 7.89 per cent, presenting an opportunity for increased engagement.

JK Home to 12 Incubators

Jammu and Kashmir is home to 12 incubators, playing a vital role in nurturing and guiding startups during their early stages, Sinha said. He said the ecosystem benefits from collaborations, with 16 partnerships and Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) established with various institutions and organisations to provide additional support and resources.

From Figures to Fables

Meanwhile, Saurabh Bhagat, IAS, Commissioner Secretary, Science and Technology Department, Government of Jammu and Kashmir, told Kashmir Observer that the government was willing to change the employment scenario of Jammu and Kashmir, and focus on training youngsters to become job providers and not job seekers. He said "our ever-growing numbers of innovators, patents, and startups captivate stories of relentless innovation. These numbers convey insights, trends, and truths, revealing patterns that transform into narratives filled with meaning and significance." he said, adding the policy provides for entrepreneurship facilities to students, women, and support to entrepreneurs through government, private and high net worth individuals for setting up startups.

Innovation Hub - creativity, collaboration, and innovation

According to officials, the concept of an Innovation Hub at the Sub Regional Science Centre in Jammu and Kashmir aims to foster creativity, collaboration, and innovation among the local community. This hub will serve as a dynamic platform where individuals can exchange ideas, access resources, and develop groundbreaking solutions to address regional challenges. The Innovation Hub will provide a supportive environment that encourages entrepreneurship, scientific exploration, and technological advancements, ultimately contributing to the socio-economic growth of Jammu and Kashmir. The primary objectives of the Innovation Hub are

Promote Innovation and Creativity: The hub will inspire and facilitate innovative thinking, creative problem-solving, ...

Key Components and Facilities:

The Innovation Hub will encompass the following components and facilities:

Co-working Spaces: Collaborative workspaces will be provided, equipped with modern infrastructure, including high-speed internet, meeting rooms, and shared amenities, to facilitate idea exchange and teamwork.

Research and Development Labs: State-of-the-art laboratories will be established to support research and development activities in diverse fields, including science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).Incubation Center: The hub will house an incubation center where budding entrepreneurs can receive mentoring, business advisory services, access to seed funding, and guidance in scaling their ventures. Innovation Showcase Area: A designated.

Stakeholders and Partnerships:-

The successful establishment and operation of the Innovation Hub will rely on strong collaboration with various stakeholders, including:

Government Agencies: Collaboration with local and regional government bodies will be sought to ensure policy support, funding opportunities, and regulatory assistance for the hub's activities.

Educational Institutions: Partnerships with universities, colleges, and schools will be established to promote knowledge exchange, research collaborations, and student involvement in innovation-driven initiatives.

Industry Partners: Collaborations with industries and corporate entities will enable technology transfer, internship opportunities, and support for entrepreneurship initiatives.

Research Organizations: Partnerships with research institutions and organizations will foster a culture of research and development, enabling the translation of cutting-edge scientific advancements into practical solutions.

Outreach and Community Engagement:

To maximize the impact of the Innovation Hub, outreach programs and community engagement initiatives will be undertaken. This includes:

Awareness Campaigns: Public awareness campaigns will be conducted to highlight the benefits of innovation, entrepreneurship, and the services provided by the hub. Skill Development Programs: The hub will organize skill development programs and training sessions targeting students, professionals, and aspiring entrepreneurs

It will also provide platform for budding innovators of J&K, wherein they will be provided space and facilities for development of prototypes of their innovations and then startups

Support for Budding Innovators and Startups:

The Innovation Hub recognizes the importance of nurturing and supporting local innovators and aspiring entrepreneurs. It will offer the following support mechanisms:

Prototyping Facilities: The hub will provide well-equipped workshops and prototyping facilities with advanced machinery, tools, and equipment. This will enable innovators to transform their concepts into tangible prototypes, facilitating the testing and refinement of their ideas. Technical Expertise: The hub will engage experienced professionals, technicians, and mentors who can provide technical guidance and assistance in the prototyping process. They will offer expertise in various domains, including engineering, design, electronics, and manufacturing. Business Incubation: As part of the incubation center, the hub will offer comprehensive support to startups. This includes mentoring, business development assistance, access to a network of investors, legal and financial advisory services, and assistance in obtaining necessary licenses and permits. Funding Opportunities: The Innovation Hub will actively explore partnerships with government agencies, private investors, and venture capital firms to create funding opportunities specifically tailored for innovators and startups in Jammu and Kashmir. This will help them secure the necessary financial resources to further develop their prototypes and scale their ventures. Networking and Collaboration: The hub will facilitate networking opportunities with industry experts, successful entrepreneurs, and potential collaborators. This will enable innovators to gain valuable insights, form partnerships, and access relevant industry networks, thus enhancing the prospects of their startups.

The Challenge Zone
Breed the Next Generation of Entrepreneurs

The world is changing rapidly, and we are at the forefront of this transformation. Technology is booming, and the way we live, both in urban and rural areas, is evolving. But with progress comes challenges. This is where you, the next generation of innovators, come in!

Startup Kashmir in association with Greenovator Incubation Foundation (GIF) and NIT Srinagar present a unique challenge for students: Can you create solutions to address the contemporary challenges faced by our society?

The top 5 solutions, as chosen by our expert panel, will receive prestigious Certificates of Appreciation and a surprise gift from GIF and NIT Srinagar.

Ready to take on the challenge?

Here are two critical areas that need your innovative mind:

Challenge 1: Industry and Sustainability

1

- **Waste Warriors Wanted!** Propose groundbreaking solutions to reduce industrial waste and pollution, all while maintaining efficiency and productivity in manufacturing.

- **Tech for a Greener Future!** How can technology be leveraged to make manufacturing processes more sustainable and eco-friendly?

- **Power Up with Renewables!** Develop innovative ways to promote renewable energy sources within industries and reduce reliance on fossil fuels.

Challenge 2: Environmental Champions

2

- **Beat Plastic Pollution!** Craft creative solutions to tackle the ever-growing problem of plastic waste in our environment.

- **Nature's Guardians!** Develop innovative methods to preserve and restore natural habitats in both urban and rural areas.

- **Conserve Our Future!** Propose strategies

  to encourage communities to adopt sustainable practices that conserve water and minimize their environmental impact.

- **Do you have the answer?** Think outside the box, be bold, and submit your solution today!

Send your solution to ideas@startupkashmir.org

Calling All Innovators

Turn Your Ideas into Reality with Greenovator Incubation Foundation, iTBI, NIT Srinagar!

Do you have a brilliant business idea brewing? Are you passionate about solving a problem and making a real impact? Greenovator Incubation Foundation (GIF) wants to hear from you!

The Challenge: We're seeking innovative business solutions that address a pressing need in today's world. Can you identify a problem and develop a scalable, sustainable business model to solve it?

The Opportunity:

- The most compelling solution will be considered for incubation at GIF.
- Our incubation program provides mentorship, resources, and access to a network of experts and investors.
- We'll help you refine your business model, secure funding, and turn your vision into a reality.

What We're Looking For:

- **Clearly defined problem:** Identify a specific pain point or challenge faced by individuals, communities, or businesses.

- **Innovative solution:** Propose a unique and effective approach to address the chosen problem.

- **Feasibility and scalability:** Demonstrate that your solution can become a successful and sustainable business.

- **Social impact:** Highlight how your business will create positive change in the world.

Ready to take the next step? Submit your business idea, and join us in building a better future!

Send your idea to ideas@startupkashmir.org

Calling all Blockchain Enthusiasts! Deep Dive into the Future with Startup Kashmir

This month, Startup Kashmir is thrilled to host a workshop on Blockchain technology, featuring industry experts!

Sharpen your Knowledge and Network:

- Gain insights from leading Blockchain specialists.
- Learn about the latest trends and applications of this revolutionary technology.
- Network with fellow enthusiasts and explore potential collaborations.

Want to Share Your Expertise?

Do you have a passion for Blockchain and a compelling perspective to share? We're inviting participants to submit their theme suggestions for a dynamic panel discussion at NIT Srinagar. Selected participants will have the opportunity to present their ideas and engage in a thought-provoking discussion alongside industry experts.

How to Participate:

- Attend the upcoming Blockchain workshop (details to be announced).
- Submit your theme suggestions for the August panel discussion (details on submission process to be announced).

Don't miss this exciting chance to expand your knowledge, connect with the community, and potentially become a panelist at the August event!

Send your theme suggestions at ideas@ startupkashmir.org

Want to Share Your Expertise?

Do you have a passion for Blockchain and a compelling perspective to share?
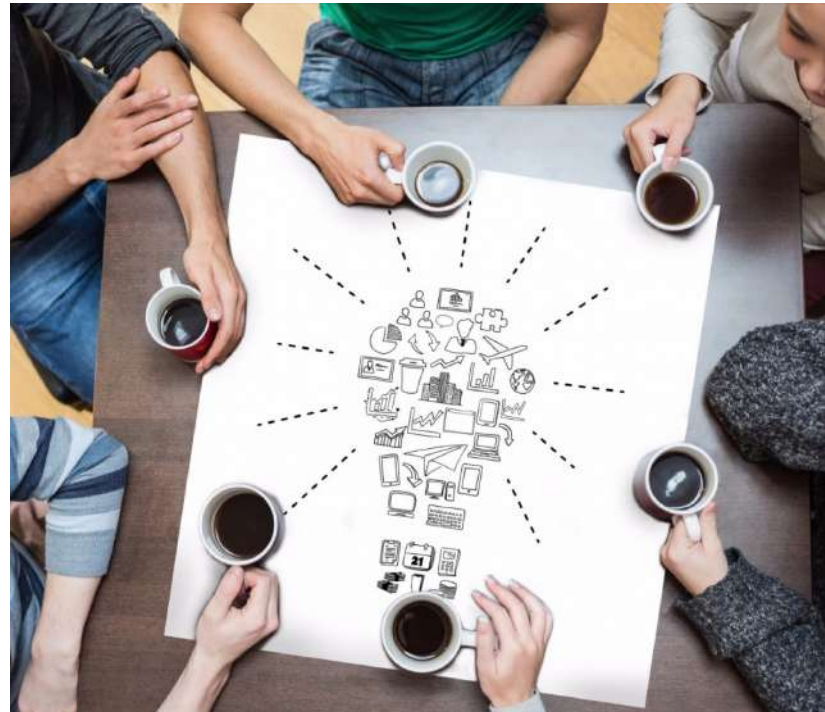
We're inviting participants to submit their ideas and suggestions for a dynamic panel discussion to be held at NIT Srinagar. Selected participants will have the opportunity to present their ideas and engage in a thought-provoking discussion alongside industry experts.

How to Participate:

You can submit your idea and suggestions to ideas@startupkashmir.org
Don't miss this exciting chance to expand your knowledge, connect with the community, and potentially become a panelist at this event!

Selected participants will be informed by phone and email.

Exciting News for Budding Entrepreneurs in Kashmir!

Introducing the **Startup Kashmir Spark** Tank Idea Hub: Your Hub for Innovation and Collaboration!

Are you ready to turn your startup dreams into reality? Look no further! Startup Kashmir is thrilled to announce the launch of our Spark Tank - a dynamic space designed for entrepreneurs like you to connect, brainstorm, and ignite groundbreaking ideas.

Community Hub: Join a vibrant community of like-minded individuals passionate about entrepreneurship. Network, collaborate, and share insights in an environment built to fuel your creativity.

Idea Generation Zone: Let your imagination run wild! Our Idea Lab is the perfect place to brainstorm and develop innovative solutions to today's challenges. From tech innovations to social impact projects, the

possibilities are endless.

Find Your Co-Founders: Seeking the perfect team to bring your vision to life? Look no further! Connect with potential co-founders and team members who share your passion and drive.

Promoting Entrepreneurship: We're committed to fostering a culture of entrepreneurship in Kashmir. The Spark Tank is just the beginning - join us as we empower individuals to build the businesses of tomorrow.

Ready to join the revolution? Visit Startup Kashmir and be a part of something extraordinary. Your journey starts here!

#**StartupKashmir** #**SparkTank** #**Entrepreneurship** #**Innovation** #**KashmirStartupScene**

Startup Kashmir

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J&K Govt Identifies 10 Focus Sectors

Jammu and Kashmir administration has identified 10 different sectors, which will be given special attention under the new start-up policy.

As per the Start-up Policy 2024-27, start-ups coming up in different sectors will get assistance and funding from the government to thrive.

The policy document reveals that these 10 sectors include food processing and allied activities, agriculture and allied sectors including horticulture and floriculture, handicrafts and handloom, education, healthcare and pharmaceuticals, textile, apparel and fashion technology, renewable energy, electronics system design and manufacturing, information technology enabled services, tourism and adventure sports and environment protection and green technology.

As per the policy, the government will create a Technical Support Unit to orchestrate networking activities between various start-up ecosystem players.

"The Government of Jammu and Kashmir shall establish a Technical Support Unit in JKEDI to orchestrate networking activities between various start-up ecosystem players such as start-ups, accelerators, incubators, angel investors, corporates, venture capitalists and other necessary stakeholders. The TSU shall provide necessary support and assistance in appraising incentive cases, collaboration with VCF's and successful implementation of this policy," it said.

Under the policy, the government has also decided to create a feedback mechanism to get insights into challenges being faced by the start-ups.

"The Government of Jammu and Kashmir will create quarterly feedback mechanisms from start-ups, mentors, incubators and other related stakeholders on its portal. These surveys, focus groups or public consultations will gather input from start-ups and other stakeholders on the implementation of the start-up policy. The feedback will help provide valuable insights into challenged being faced by the start-ups and the support they intend to receive," it said.

Pertinently, the union territory administration has targeted to establish Jammu and Kashmir as one of the leading start-up ecosystems in India by 2027.

Under the policy, the administration has targeted to set up at least 2000 new start-ups in Jammu and Kashmir in next five years.

Jammu and Kashmir under the policy has constituted a High-Level Empowered Committee (HLEC) to monitor the performance of Jammu and Kashmir start-up eco-system.

With Chief Secretary as the chairman of the 12-membered HLEC, the committee as per the document shall take necessary decisions for encouragement of innovations in Jammu and Kashmir and modify start-up policy, guidelines from time -to-time

The government has also constituted a start-up task force to monitor the implementation of policy and decisions of HLEC on a regular basis. The 10-membered task force will be headed by administrative secretary Industries and Commerce department

Breaking The Barriers

Woman entrepreneur Nusrat Hassan's Journey from Employment to Entrepreneurship

Dabirah Hassan

In a society where traditional gender roles have often confined women to the domestic sphere, Nusrat Hassan stands out as a beacon of empowerment and entrepreneurship. Born and raised in the family of Kashmir Moulvi Ali Baba in Zadibal, Srinagar and later integrated into the Biegh Family of Reshipora, Budgam, Hassan's journey is one of resilience and determination.

Hassan's early education at Zadibal High School laid the foundation for her future endeavors. Despite societal pressures, she got engaged during her 10th standard and married at the tender age of 17, while still pursuing her education. Although she couldn't complete her graduation due to unforeseen circumstances, Hassan's thirst for knowledge never waned.

Transitioning from the classroom to the domestic sphere, Hassan initially took an employment and worked as a teacher in various private schools in central Kashmir's district Budgam. However, her entrepreneurial spirit led her to venture into the world of knitting. Establishing her boutique within the confines of her home, Hassan defied convention by refusing to relocate her business elsewhere, opting instead to manage her family and enterprise under one roof.

For over two decades, Hassan has nurtured her knitting business, mentoring countless women along the way. Through her guidance, many have found the con-fidence to launch their own boutiques, thereby contributing to their households and communities. Her boutique, adorned with an eclectic array of woolen goods, showcases both her craftsmanship and the talents of her employees.

Despite juggling the responsibilities of motherhood and entrepreneurship, Hassan remains undeterred in her pursuit of success. Her three daughters, each charting their unique paths, serve as a testament to her unwavering dedication to both family and career. From pursuing PhDs to venturing into journalism, Hassan's daughters embody the spirit of empowerment instilled by their mother.

In an era marked by the rising prominence of women across various domains, Nusrat Hassan's story serves as an inspiration to those striving to strike a balance between personal fulfillment and professional aspirations. Her unwavering commitment to both her family and business epitomizes the limitless potential of women in today's society.

"I have always believed in the power of perseverance and determination. By balancing my roles as a mother and entrepreneur, I hope to inspire others to pursue their dreams without compromising on their responsibilities," said Nusrat Hassan.

As women continue to shatter stereotypes and carve out their places in traditionally male-dominated fields, Nusrat Hassan's journey stands as a testament to the indomitable spirit of female empowerment.

QUICK TAKE

Kashmiri Startups Pitched in front of International Group

The Greenovator Incubation Foundation, at the forefront of fostering startup innovation, made significant strides by engaging with a renowned global investment summit alongside the esteemed Mubadala Group. This strategic move served as a conduit connecting promising startups with the expansive opportunities facilitated by Mubadala.

Hailing from Abu Dhabi, the Mubadala Group stands as a prominent global investment company with a diverse portfolio and substantial influence across various sectors, positioning it as a sought-after collaborator for budding entrepreneurs. With a proven track record of successful investments, Mubadala's participation in this summit signaled promising prospects for the involved startups.

The investors from Mubadala Group held a notable ticket size for investments, amounting to 250 billion dollars, creating an atmosphere of anticipation and potential for the startups participating.

Each startup from Kashmir was passionately presented by its founder, highlighting not only their ideas but also the potential for growth and positive impact. Judges were not only impressed by the innovation but also praised the startups for their openness, friendliness, and adaptability during the pitch sessions.

The startups from Kashmir seamlessly aligned with Mubadala's strategic vision, with judges acknowledging their unique perspectives and valuable contributions. The feedback emphasized the potential synergy between Mubadala's global vision and the innovative spirit of these startups, setting the stage for future collaborations and advancements in the realms of business and technology.

Moreover, the collaboration holds the promise of not only transforming the Kashmiri economy but also establishing the region as a thriving nursery for startups. This infusion of investment and expertise has the potential to create a vibrant ecosystem, nurturing new businesses, generating employment opportunities, and contributing significantly to the economic and technological advancement of Kashmir. It's a remarkable opportunity for the region to blossom into a hub of innovation and prosperity.

KAN Organises Session With Prof Handa For Kashmir Based Startups

Kashmir Angel Network (KAN) organised a special session and roped in renowned entrepreneur and educator, Professor Sunil Handa to be part of an engaging lecture for Kashmir-based startups.

With the aim of inspiring and equipping aspiring entrepreneurs with a necessary skill set, the session held at IHM Rajbagh, provided a platform for Professor Handa to share his extensive expertise and experiences in the field of entrepreneurship.

Known for his ability to guide aspiring entrepreneurs, founder of Eklavya Education Foundation and faculty at Indian Institute Of Management(IIM) Ahmedabad, Professor Handa deliberated upon various facets of entrepreneurship and other related issues.

With his deep understanding of the entrepreneurial landscape and his ability to inspire and guide individuals, Professor Handa addressed the concerns of participants and provided them with spot solutions to various issues.

The session fostered active participation and created an interactive learning environment, allowing participants to benefit from the experience and expertise of Professor Handa.

Wildfloc Adventures Secures Investment from Kashmir Angel Network

In yet another promising development for the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir, the Kashmir Angel Network (KAN) has announced the infusion of seed funding from IIT Ropar into Wildfloc Adventures, one of the startups nurtured within KAN's network.

"This investment, facilitated through our collaboration with the Wadhwani Foundation, stands as a significant milestone not only for Wildfloc Adventures but also as a testament to the immense potential and innovative spirit present in the Kashmir region as a whole.

Wildfloc Adventures, an innovative startup, specializing in offbeat trekking and camping adventure activities, has secured an undisclosed amount in seed funding from the Indian Institute of Technology Ropar (IIT Ropar). This investment marks a significant milestone in Wildfloc Adventures' mission to offer end-to-end and customized services to tourists, pioneering a unique approach to exploring the great outdoors.

Founded by Hummayoun Dhar and Faseeh Khan, who left their corporate jobs in Bangalore to pursue their passion for adventure and entrepreneurship, Wildfloc Adventures aims to redefine the adventure travel industry.

Seven new industrial estates to come up in Jammu & Kashmir

The Jammu and Kashmir administration has approved the setting up of seven new industrial estates at a cost of Rs 304.51 crore, an official spokesperson said on Thursday. The estimated investment in these industrial estates, spread over 5,290 kanal across six districts, is Rs 8,700.16 crore with employment potential of 28,376 people, the spokesperson said. He said the administrative approval for the development of seven new industrial estates was accorded by the administrative council that met here under the chairmanship of Lt Governor Manoj Sinha. The seven new industrial estates will be developed at Sempora Medicity and Khunmoh-Panthachowk in Srinagar, Banderpora in Budgam, Bhagthali in Kathua, Karandi in Samba, Trenz in Shopian, and Hariparigam Tral in Pulwama.

The new industrial estate at Sempora on 517 kanal of state land shall be developed by IRCON at an estimated cost of Rs 22.60 crore, and the project will attract an investment of Rs 1,825.45 crore, having an employment generation potential of around 11,643. The industrial estate at Khunmoh, Pantha Chowk, on 600 kanal of land shall be developed at an estimated cost of Rs 45.36 crore by IRCON, he said, adding the project will attract investment of Rs 465 crore and has employment potential of around 355. He said the industrial estate at Bhagthali, Kathua, on 2,949 kanal shall be developed at an estimated cost of Rs 83.13 crore by NBCC. The project will attract an investment of Rs 4,599.89 crore and has employment potential of around 8,278, the spokesperson said.

Startup Kashmir

STARTUP SECRETS

....Startup Buzzfeed

What is a Startup?

A startup is a new business that aims to provide a product or service to solve a specific problem. At its core, a startup is a young company designed to scale rapidly, disrupting traditional markets with innovative solutions or groundbreaking ideas. The term is often associated with technology-driven enterprises, but startups can emerge in various sectors, including healthcare, finance, and even agriculture.

Unicorn: A startup valued at over $1 billion. The term emphasizes the rarity and exceptional nature of such companies.

Bootstrapping: Building and growing a startup using personal funds or revenue generated by the business, without external financing.

MVP (Minimum Viable Product): The initial version of a product with the minimum features required to satisfy early customers and collect feedback for future development.

Pitch Deck: A presentation that provides an overview of a startup's business, including its value proposition, market opportunity, team, and financial projections, often used when seeking investment.

Angel Investor: A high-net-worth individual who provides financial support to startups in exchange for equity or convertible debt.

01 Microsoft Launches Rural Entrepreneurship Development Initiative:

This program provides digital skills training and technology resources to support rural businesses. This can be availed by the budding entrepreneurs particularly by those living in remote areas of Kashmir.

(For more information visit: https://news.microsoft.com/source/)

02 Global Youth Climate Entrepreneurship Competition Launched:

This competition seeks innovative solutions to the climate crisis from entrepreneurs under 30, offering mentorship, funding, and networking opportunities.

(For more information visit : https://unfccc.int/)

03 "She Means Business" Initiative Empowers Women Entrepreneurs:

This initiative launched by World Bank provides grants, training, and access to investors for women-led businesses. Inspiring for female entrepreneurs in Kashmir seeking support and funding.

(For more information visit: https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/entrepreneurship/gender)

04 Micro-Entrepreneurship Training Empowers Refugees (UNHCR):

This program provides practical business skills and resources to refugees starting their own businesses. A potential model for supporting displaced communities in Kashmir.

(For more information visit: https://www.unhcr.org/)

05 Social Enterprise Incubator Nurtures Sustainable Businesses:

This incubator supports ventures addressing social and environmental challenges. A model for young Kashmiris looking to combine business with social impact.

(For more information visit: https://www.ashoka.org/en-us)

Q&A

with **Shahid Ansari**

Qs: How is a Startup different from a conventional business?

Javed Ahmed
Businessman Anantnag

A startup is typically a young company founded by entrepreneurs to develop a unique product or service. Startups aim for rapid growth and disruption in new markets, often with untested business models. Innovation and scalability are key to their success, and they are typically funded by angel investors and venture capitalists. What distinguishes a startup from a conventional business is its emphasis on scalability and the potential for rapid growth. Successful startups identify gaps in existing solutions and present novel ways to bridge them. This problem-solving approach fuels innovation, making startups catalysts for change in diverse industries.

Ultimately, a startup is more than just a business; it's an adventure. It's a chance to challenge the norm, to test your limits, and to build something truly remarkable. It's about leaving your mark on the world.

The world of startups buzzes with its own unique language, a vibrant lexicon that can leave outsiders scratching their heads. But fear not, aspiring entrepreneurs! Here's your decoder ring to navigate the lingo like a pro:

Qs: Is it important to have money to launch a Startup company?

Suhail Ahmad Dar
B.Tech NIT Srinagar

Ans: No, it's not strictly necessary to have a large amount of money to launch a startup. Many successful ventures have started with minimal funds through bootstrapping, strategic partnerships, or seeking funding at later stages. The importance of money depends on the nature of the business and its initial requirements.

Qs: What should be basis for the survival of healthy startup?

Shakir Ahmad Parray
B.Tech NIT Srinagar

Ans: There are multiple factors to make a healthy startup, some of them are:
- **Compelling Value:** Solve a real problem with a unique solution.
- **Business model:** Ensure financial viability and adapt quickly.
- **Good team:** Combine complementary skills, passion, and cultural fit.
- **Execution is key:** Prioritize, adapt, and learn from data.
- **Love your customer:** Deeply understand and delight your target audience.
- **Cultural sensitivity:** Operate with respect and build trust.
- **Resourcefulness:** Adapt to potential challenges and always keep local dynamics in mind.

Remember, it's a continuous journey. Adapt, learn, and iterate for success!

Qs: How can I initially manage my startup on my own?

Reeba Ashraf
Student.

Ans: Managing everything on your own in the initial stages of a startup requires effective multitasking and resourcefulness. Here are few pointers that can guide you:
Time Management: Allocate dedicated time blocks for different tasks. Create a schedule and stick to it.
Automation Tools: Utilize automation tools for repetitive tasks, such as email marketing, social media scheduling, or invoicing.
Networking and Support: Build a network of mentors, advisors, and fellow entrepreneurs. Seek advice and support from those who have experience in your industry.

Set Realistic Goals: Establish achievable short-term goals. Celebrate small victories and use them as motivation to tackle larger challenges.
Adaptability: Stay flexible and adapt to changing circumstances. Be open to adjusting your strategies based on feedback and market dynamics.
Budget Wisely: Be careful with your expenses. Allocate resources wisely, focusing on essentials that directly contribute to business growth.
Seek Feedback: Encourage feedback from users or customers. Use their insights to refine your product or service and enhance the overall user experience.
Maintain Work-Life Balance: While managing multiple aspects of your startup, ensure you maintain a reasonable work-life balance to prevent burnout.

Question: How do I choose my team?

Shahid Nisar
B-Tech
NIT Srinagar

Answer:
Choosing the right team is crucial for the success of any startup. Here are some key considerations when selecting your team members:

Defining Your Needs:
Start by clearly outlining the essential roles your startup needs to function, considering both immediate and future requirements. What skills and expertise are crucial for each position? Be specific!

Ensure that each team member brings unique strengths and capabilities to the table.

Skill Set and Expertise:
Identify the skills and expertise required for your startup. Look for team members who complement each other's skills to cover a diverse range of responsibilities.

Don't just look for carbon copies of yourself. Assemble a team with diverse skillsets that complement each other. Seek individuals who can fill your gaps and bring unique perspectives to the table.

Passion and Commitment:
Seek individuals who are passionate about the industry or problem your startup is addressing. Passionate team members are more likely to stay committed during challenging times.

Interviewing and Selection:
Go beyond resumes, while qualifications matter, prioritize candidates who demonstrate passion, adaptability, and a willingness to learn and grow with your startup. Conduct thorough interviews that assess not just skills but also cultural fit and problem-solving abilities.

Experience:
Look for individuals with relevant experience in your industry or field. Experience can bring valuable insights and networks that benefit the startup.

Assess their track record and past achievements.

Evaluate the networks and connections that potential team members bring. A well-connected team can open doors to partnerships, investors, and other opportunities.

Shared Vision:
Ensure that all team members share a common vision for the startup's future. Misalignment in long-term goals can lead to conflicts later on. Remember, building a strong team takes time. Foster open communication, collaboration, and continuous learning within your team to ensure everyone feels valued and contributes effectively to your startup's success.

Do you have a question about startups, entrepreneurship, or innovation?
Whether you're a budding entrepreneur, a student, seasoned business owner, or just passionate about the startup ecosystem, I'm here to connect and engage with you. Feel free to drop me an email at **info@startupkashmir.org** with subject line "Q&A" or WhatsApp your query on **+91-9596012240**.
Your question with an answer will be published in our next issue.

AI and Kashmir Entrepreneurs

Bilal Ahmad Wani

Most of us have heard about AI in news and over the internet. It is the most buzzing word in the industry these days. Let us first understand what is AI (Artificial Intelligence) and what are various types of AI. AI (Artificial Intelligence) in the simple words means the computer system which imitates the human intelligence. Human intelligence has the capacity for problem-solving, learning, reasoning, perception and language understanding. The way humans keep learning same way AI systems learn from huge data and adapt their behavior accordingly by using machine learning and natural language processing systems and technology

The other buzz word is Gen AI (Generative Artificial Intelligence), which simple means the content generated using AI systems. GenAI uses AI models and complex algorithms to generate the content which could be media, text, images etc. This has revolutionized the media and entertainment industry.

There are various types of AI systems which include, Weak AI, General AI, Super AI and many more. The AI can be applied to any walk of life or business. We need to expand our understanding around AI and its uses.

Kashmir Entrepreneurs can utilize the AI in various sectors to build a profitable and futuristic business ventures. Some of the use cases described below might be helpful in igniting the neurons to form a strong business model.

In the article we shall briefly touch upon the AI use cases for Education and Agriculture sector.

In education sector AI will surely revolutionize many current trends and most significant use-cases would include:

- **AI based learning assistants,** based on the individual needs understanding power, AI shall identify learning gaps, create relevant content, and real time feedback analysis. This will help students to grasp the concepts more effectively at their own pace.

- **Personalized education,** AI will tailor the content based on students preference and learning pace. This will create a adapting learning environment for the students.

- **AI Tutoring,** the tutoring segment will surely be the focus and AI based tutoring offers personalized guidance, explanation, concepts and much more. These systems are available round the clock and will help students understand and grasp concepts faster.

- **AI based personality assessment,** the personality assessment of a student will help in crafting a 360 degree learning program for the students.

The agriculture sector is also witnessing huge changes due to AI based systems. Some of the most prominent uses-cases include:-

Crop and soil monitoring

AI powered computer vision systems can analyze the images of the crops captured using aerial drones to detect the micro and macronutrients present in the soil.

Intelligent spraying

AI driven precision spraying optimizes pesticide and fertilizer application. This will ensure healthy crops and better yield.

Automatic weeding

Automatic AI based weeding identifies and removes weeds without human intervention

Aerial survey and imaging

AI algorithms can process the high resolution images captured by drones to assess crop health and monitor the growth. It can be very useful in identification of potential issues.

Insect and plant disease detection

AI computer vision; as discussed above, will analyze the images and identify the plant diseases. It will also recommend the proper resolution to identified problems.

In the next article we shall discuss more on the use case related to health sector. There are many areas where AI will impact the lives around us. As the budding entrepreneurs we should clearly identify what problem are we solving and develop a deep understanding around it. We should clearly identify the business potential and create a robust sustainable business model around it.

Hope the article helped you getting few ideas around AI, please feel free to share your comments/suggestions to help us improve.

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