

DISRUPTIVE DISPATCH: NIC KARACHI FOCUSLINE



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

**UBL NATIONAL INNOVATION
HACKATHON 2026**

**FROM FREELANCER TO FOUNDER 4.0
CANVA EVENT BY PAFLA**

**VOL.2
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TOP STORY OF THE MONTH



UBL National Innovation Hackathon 2026

The three-day UBL National Innovation Hackathon 2026, organized by the National Incubation Center Karachi (NIC Karachi), an Ignite-funded initiative under the Ministry of IT & Telecom, in collaboration with United Bank Limited (UBL), concluded successfully with 25 teams selected from 1,283 applicants nationwide. Participants developed innovative solutions for Pakistan's financial, banking, and payments ecosystem through 72 hours of intensive collaboration, prototyping, and problem-solving.

The structured challenge covered user research, customer journey mapping, UI/UX design, clickable prototypes, business model validation, feasibility planning, and functional product development. Participants also received expert mentorship and technical guidance. The closing ceremony recognized all teams with participation certificates, reaffirming NIC Karachi and UBL's commitment to fostering innovation, digital transformation, financial inclusion, and future-ready FinTech solutions.

Startup Success Blueprint

Session 1: Branding and Storytelling

NIC Karachi hosted a Branding and Storytelling session with Saad Afridi, Founder of Scents N Stories, bringing together startup founders and entrepreneurs to explore the role of authentic branding in building impactful businesses. The session provided practical insights into brand identity, storytelling, and customer engagement, equipping founders with strategies to communicate their vision effectively, strengthen brand loyalty, and support long-term business growth.



Session 2: Intellectual Property (IP) Protection

NIC Karachi hosted a curriculum session on Intellectual Property (IP) Protection with **Shaikh Rashid Alam**, Founder & CEO of Brands Foundation, focusing on safeguarding startup ideas, brands, and innovations. The session provided founders with practical insights into patents, trademarks, copyrights, and IP strategies, enabling them to protect assets, strengthen business value, and build resilient, scalable, and investment-ready ventures.



Session 3: Crafting Powerful Pitches The Art of Storytelling

Nidhal Shaikh, Founder & CMO of TouchGrass Agency. The session guided founders through live pitching exercises, storytelling techniques, investor-ready decks, and effective communication strategies. Participants received practical feedback on pitch structure and delivery, strengthening their ability to present ideas and build compelling narratives for startup growth.



BUZZ Board

Accelerating NIC Karachi!



NIC Karachi participated in the **DHA Suffa University** Final Year Project Exhibition (Computer Science Department), for evaluation of projects by students across artificial intelligence, healthcare, medical technologies, and software development. The engagement enabled students to receive constructive feedback on their solutions while exploring opportunities to transform promising ideas into scalable ventures, strengthening academia-industry collaboration and supporting Pakistan's innovation ecosystem.

News Spotlight



Digital 365 News featured **Dr. Muhammad Umair Arif**, PhD, Founder of The Disrupt Labs and mentor at NIC Karachi, on its morning show Rise & Shine, where he discussed startups, artificial intelligence, and the future of education. The conversation highlighted practical strategies for protecting personal information, strengthening mobile security, and promoting cybersecurity awareness, reinforcing the importance of safe digital practices in an increasingly connected world.

The Latest at NIC Karachi



From Freelancer to Founder 4.0

NIC Karachi and the Pakistan Freelancers Association (PAFLA), in collaboration with Canva Community Karachi, hosted the fifth edition of 'From Freelancer to Founder 4.0', bringing together freelancers, creators, and aspiring entrepreneurs to explore pathways for building scalable businesses. **Saqib Intizar**, E-commerce Expert & Freelancing Coach, shared practical insights on branding, storytelling, AI-powered creativity, and leveraging Canva to drive business growth and unlock new opportunities.



WIE Mentorship & Leadership Summit 2026

NIC Karachi hosted the EmpowerHer: WIE Mentorship & Leadership Summit 2026, bringing together students, professionals, and aspiring leaders for mentorship and networking. Moderated by Wellfolks Founder **Hira Shafi**, the summit spotlighted leadership, confidence, and career growth for women in engineering, tech, and entrepreneurship.



Masterclass for Tech Founders

NIC Karachi, in collaboration with the Pakistan IT Industry Association (P@SHA), hosted an online Masterclass for Tech Founders with **Abdul Wahab Malik**, Co-Founder of Aitisaal. The session explored product readiness, product-market fit, customer validation, and market entry strategies, equipping founders with practical frameworks to validate ideas, strengthen launch strategies, and build products with sustainable market potential.

The Latest at NIC Karachi



Junoon: The Fire Within

NIC Karachi hosted the masterclass “Junoon: The Fire Within,” with **Imran Batoaq**, Head of Sales at YOTTABYTE, focusing on the mindset and discipline required for entrepreneurial success. The session explored purpose-driven leadership, resilience, and strategies for overcoming startup challenges, providing founders with practical insights on maintaining consistency and building sustainable ventures while fostering a growth-oriented entrepreneurial ecosystem.



Canva for Founders

NIC Karachi hosted Canva AI Camp: Canva for Founders, bringing together startup founders for a hands-on learning session on AI-powered design, branding tools, and creative workflows by **Sheikh Hammad Amjad**. Led by Canva MENAP Team members Ahmad I., General Manager MENAP, Rania H., Head of SMB MENAP, Fatima Malik, and Muhammad Yasin, the session equipped participants with practical skills to enhance branding, streamline content creation, and strengthen startup communication.



Bano Qabil Convocation

NIC Karachi participated as a Supporting Partner at the Alkhidmat Foundation Pakistan Bano Qabil Convocation 2026, recognizing graduates equipped with technical, digital, and AI skills to strengthen Pakistan’s innovation and digital economy. NIC Karachi Cohort 15 startup Safirrah, founded by Adeel Karim, showcased its women-centric mobility solution at the event, highlighting innovative approaches to improving accessibility, mobility, and economic participation.

The Latest at NIC Karachi



Climate Innovation Pakistan

NIC Karachi hosted an ecosystem session as the Growth Partner for **Climate Innovation Pakistan (CLIP)**, bringing together stakeholders to discuss opportunities and challenges in scaling climate-focused solutions. The session featured insights from CLIP Cohort 1 startups and highlighted opportunities available through CLIP Cohort 2. The engagement strengthened connections between climate innovators, networks, and support systems, advancing Pakistan's climate innovation ecosystem.



Employee Recognition

NIC Karachi, operated by LMKT, recognized outstanding team members through its 'Employee of the Quarter' initiative, celebrating dedication, professionalism, and contributions toward organizational excellence. Syed Azfar Hussain, Project Director of NIC Karachi, and Majid Hussain, Head of Operations & HR, presented certificates to Tariq Majeed, Communications Specialist, and Sehrish Riaz, Growth Specialist, acknowledging their efforts in strengthening NIC Karachi's culture of collaboration and innovation.



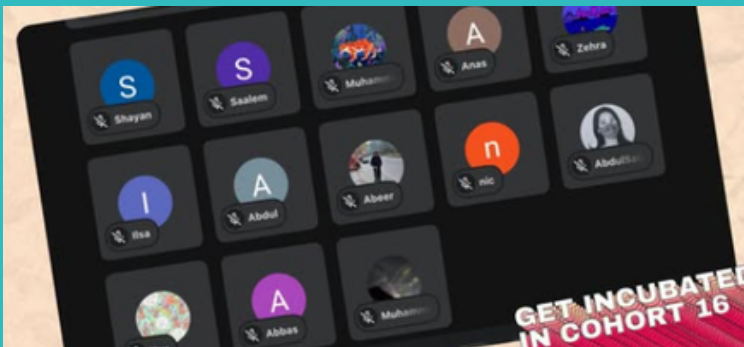
UNIDO Delegation

The UNIDO representative Ambreen Naz, National Social Sector Expert, and a delegation from Yunus Environment Hub, Christina Jäger, Co-founder & Managing Director, and Julie Chrysler, Circular Economy & Social Impact Director, visited NIC Karachi to engage with the startup ecosystem and explore opportunities for future collaboration. They met NIC Karachi Project Director, Syed Azfar Hussain, to exchange insights on the center's initiatives and discuss areas of mutual interest in fostering innovation and entrepreneurship.

BUZZ Board

Accelerating NIC Karachi!

Outreach Activities



NIC Karachi conducted an online Cohort 16 induction session for students of **Habib University**, organized by NICKHI Campus Ambassador Fateema Amin C. The session introduced students to NIC Karachi's ecosystem, incubation opportunities, and the startup journey, covering how ideas evolve into scalable ventures. The engagement encouraged entrepreneurial thinking and connected students with resources to explore innovation and business-building opportunities.



NIC Karachi conducted an online session (Cohort 16 induction) for students of **Iqra University**, organized by NICKHI Campus Ambassador Ali Irfan. The session introduced students to NIC Karachi's ecosystem, startup incubation opportunities, and the journey of transforming ideas into scalable ventures. The engagement strengthened university outreach, encouraged entrepreneurial thinking, and connected aspiring founders with resources to explore innovation and business-building opportunities.



NIC Karachi held awareness session regarding induction of Cohort 16 for students of **The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan (ICAP)**, facilitated by NICKHI Campus Ambassador Saif Ali. The session introduced students to NIC Karachi's ecosystem, startup opportunities, and the journey of building scalable ventures from ideas. The engagement enhanced NIC Karachi's outreach, fostered an entrepreneurial mindset, and connected aspiring founders with incubation resources and opportunities for innovation.

BUZZ Board

Accelerating NIC Karachi!

Outreach Activities



NIC Karachi conducted an awareness session for students at **NED University of Engineering and Technology**, facilitated by Campus Ambassadors Arzoo Fatima Makhdoom and Areesha Ahmed. The session introduced participants to NIC Karachi's incubation ecosystem, Cohort 16 opportunities, and the journey from an initial idea to a viable venture. It also highlighted mentorship, funding support, and incubation resources, strengthening campus engagement and encouraging students to explore entrepreneurship.

Coaching Sessions



NIC Karachi hosted a Business Model & Strategy coaching session with **Nida Farid**, providing startup founders with strategic guidance on strengthening business models and driving sustainable growth. Zaireen participated in a one-on-one discussion, receiving practical insights on refining its solution, addressing key business challenges, and building a stronger, more scalable venture.

Exclusives: From us to you

You're safe. We'll help you
find your next, best move.



What helps a startup move from an idea to a scalable business? Explore how problem validation, customer insights, experimentation, and a strong understanding of market needs help founders build solutions that create real value and support sustainable growth.



Must-Watch Movie

This docu-style film explores the early battles of the **3D printing industry**, offering a fascinating look at the challenges of building and competing in the hardware space.

Top News

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[Reshape Enterprise Technology in](#)
[2026](#)

[The New Way AI Startups Are](#)
[Raising Millions in 2026](#)

[America's Best Incubators and](#)
[Accelerators of 2026](#)

Book Recommendation

Starting a StartUp: How to Build Something People Actually Want by James Sinclair offers a practical and honest guide for early-stage founders navigating the challenges of building a startup from scratch. Drawing on real-world experience, the book focuses on turning ideas into traction through actionable frameworks.



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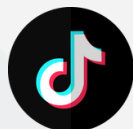
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