

# KU harbours conducive ecosystem for start-ups, entrepreneurship: VC

*Pledges support to upskill innovations*



Srinagar, May 10: To encourage a culture of self-reliance and employability, the University of Kashmir (KU), is consistently nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit among its students, including local youth, by empowering them through innovative initiatives in skill development, start-ups and entrepreneurship.

To give it a final shape and form, the New Generation Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Centre (NewGen IEDC), University of Kashmir (KU), Thursday organised an interaction session with the recently shortlisted start-ups here.

The start-ups were shortlisted following a 3-day 'Spring Start-up Challenge' workshop held from March 25-27, 2024 and organized by the varsity's NewGen IEDC Incubation Centre.

KU Vice Chancellor, Prof Nilofar Khan, chaired the session attended by Registrar, Prof Naseer Iqbal; Dean College Development Council, Prof Khursheed Ahmad Butt; Director, Institute of Technology (IoT), Zakura, Prof Tariq Ahmad Bandy; Special Secretary to KU VC, Dr Ashfaq Ahmad Zarri; Coordinator of NewGen IEDC, Dr Sartaj Hussain and Nodal Officer, NewGen IEDC, Dr Parvez Ahmad Shah.

"The groundwork for this collaborative endeavour was laid during the 'Spring Start-up Challenge' that garnered an overwhelming response, attracting a total of 40 start-ups, innovators and aspiring entrepreneurs from diverse sectors," an official spokesperson said in a statement issued here.

Following rigorous evaluation, a dozen promising start-ups were shortlisted for further handholding, mentorship and other necessary assistance by the university, he said.

“The interaction included exchange of ideas, as the participants discussed resource requirements and strategies for upscaling their ventures,” the statement read.

The start-up ideas cover domains, including clean energy, agritech, retail and e-commerce, healthcare, cloud kitchen and environmental sustainability.

On the occasion, KU Vice Chancellor, Prof Nilofer Khan underlined the varsity’s endeavours in nurturing a conducive ecosystem for start-ups and entrepreneurship within its campuses.

“The university’s proactive engagement with the start-up community reflects its dedication to drive socio-economic growth through innovation and enterprise,” Prof Khan said, adding that as the journey of the future start-ups unfolds, the university stands firm in empowering them to realize their full potential and make meaningful contributions to the society.

She asserted KU’s commitment in providing comprehensive support to budding entrepreneurs, leveraging its academic resources, industry partnerships and infrastructural facilities.

KU Registrar, Prof Naseer Iqbal, emphasised the importance of skill and start-up development in the region and said that the varsity’s partnership with industry and government agencies ensures that the students are well-prepared to meet the demands of the job market.

“Our university is mentoring the start-ups and sponsoring them wherever necessary while simultaneously emphasising practical skills and a culture of innovation,” Prof Naseer Iqbal added.

The varsity’s initiatives include incubation centres, entrepreneurship development programmes, workshops and seminars conducted in collaboration with industry experts and mentors. These initiatives aim to provide students with hands-on experience, mentorship, and networking opportunities to turn their ideas into successful ventures, read the statement.