

# 2025 ANNUAL *newsletter*



## THE YEAR OF **INNOVATION** **BECAME** INEVITABLE

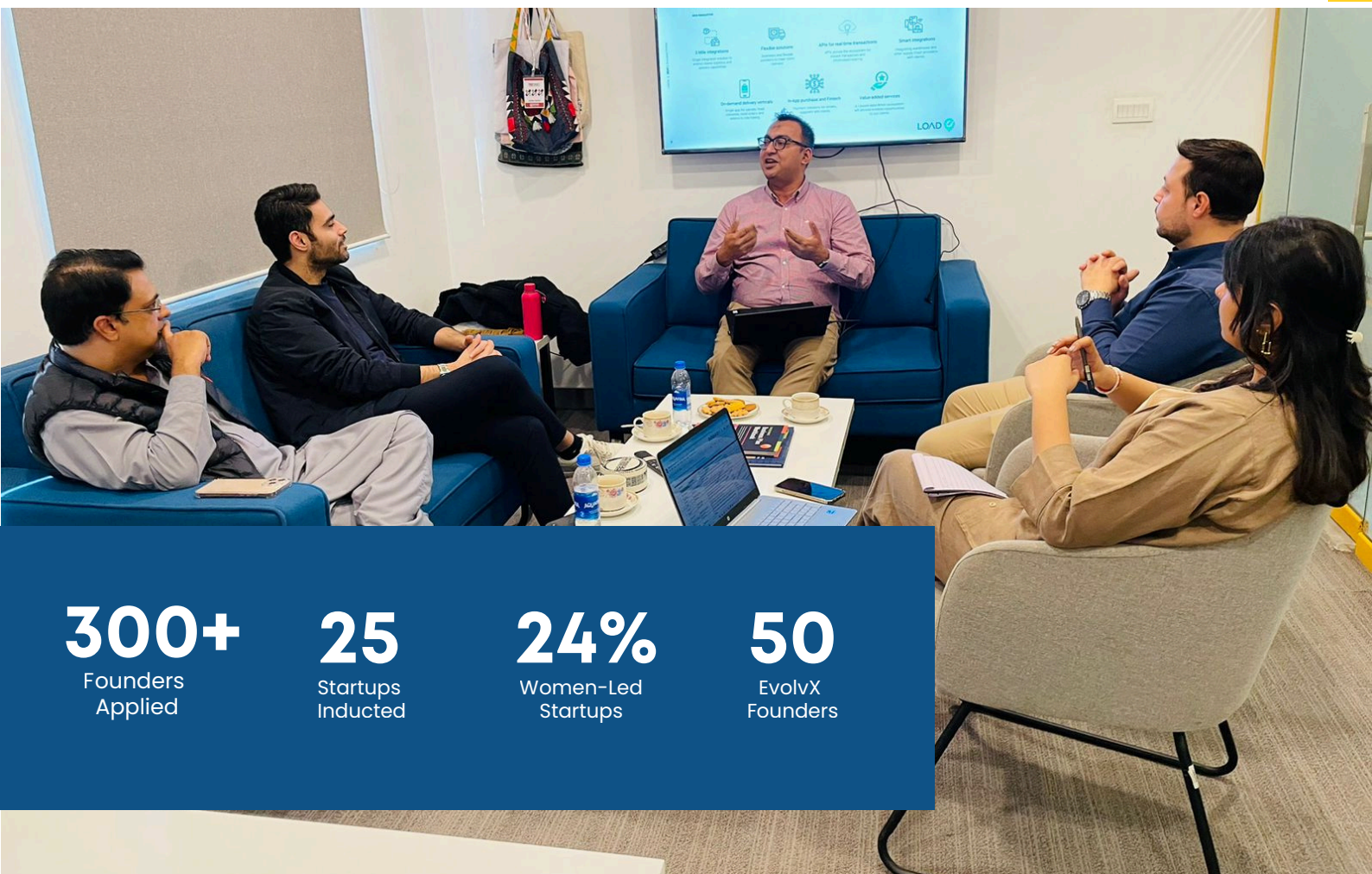
How Hyderabad's founders stopped asking for permission  
and started building Pakistan's digital future

[www.nichyderabad.com](http://www.nichyderabad.com)

# THIS WASN'T JUST ANOTHER YEAR

2025 was the year we stopped asking "Can Hyderabad build world-class startups?" and started proving it. Over 300 founders applied to Cohort 7. Grants were secured. Startups took the national stage, with TV appearances and international showcases.

But the real story unfolds after hours, in pitch decks rewritten at midnight, pivots that sting, and founders who refused to wait for permission to build.





# THE MOMENT THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

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In July, Federal IT Minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja stood in our space and said what we'd been feeling: "Hyderabad's entrepreneurs are helping shape Pakistan's digital future." Not Karachi. Not Lahore. Hyderabad. That day, 32 startups from Cohorts 4 and 5 graduated. But more importantly, that day marked our third anniversary, and the moment we stopped being an experiment and became a movement.



# COHORT 7: WHERE BOLD IDEAS BEGIN

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- 01** 300+ founders applied across Sindh; after four days of intensive pitching, 25 startups from 10+ industries were selected, including 24% women-led ventures, with expert panels providing mentorship and valuable insights.

## EVOLVX: BUILDING THE PIPELINE

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- 02** Batches 2 and 3 supported 50 early-stage founders through structured training and mentorship, using intensive Business Model Canvas sessions to uncover gaps, sharpen execution, and prepare ideas for market readiness.

**TRANSFORMING  
CONCEPTS  
INTO REALITY  
AND  
NURTURING  
INNOVATION**



# THE STARTUPS THAT MADE HEADLINES



## RENT HIVES: PKR 2M ON LIVE TV

Secured PKR 2 million on The Cash Cow Show, Pakistan's nationally televised startup competition. Today they're running a premium outlet making sustainable fashion accessible. That's what happens when preparation meets national spotlight.

## PAK BIOENERGY: PKR 20M GRANT

Received PKR 20 million from the EU-funded GRASP Project and inaugurated their biomass production facility from incubation to industrial infrastructure. Clean energy doesn't wait for perfect conditions; it creates them.



## ANIMAL PASSPORT: MEDIA PHENOMENON

Featured on ARY News, Express Morning Show, Aaj Pakistan, and PTV News. Their AI-powered biometric livestock identity system didn't just get coverage, it sparked nationwide conversations about protecting farmers' livelihoods through technology.



## LOADE: GLOBAL RECOGNITION

LOADE didn't just win awards, they put Hyderabad on the global logistics map. Winner of the HBL P@SHA ICT Award for Supply Chain & Logistics, they went on to represent Pakistan at GITEX Africa, showcasing that tech-enabled solutions built here can compete on the international stage.



## WOMEN FOUNDERS LEADING

2025 was a year of breakthroughs for women founders at NIC Hyderabad. Ayesha Amin earned a place in UPenn's SP2 Hall of Fame, while Anmol Zehrah and Mahnoor Iqbal were selected for the EmpowerHer U.S.–South Asia Women Innovators Program. Six more trailblazing women were recognized at the She Leads Awards.

## INTERNATIONAL STAGES

NIC Hyderabad startups didn't just dream globally, they built globally. Rapid Pay made waves at GITEX Europe, EarthRenewal.AI showcased innovation at IEEE YESIST Kuala Lumpur, ZETSOL represented Pakistan at GITEX Global, and Aashi Herbs signed an MoU with Guinea's PEXSA.





# THE ECOSYSTEM THAT SHOWED UP

Our founders didn't build alone. This year brought unprecedented support from investors, mentors, and partners who believed in Hyderabad's potential.

## SIXTH INVESTOR SUMMIT

Karim Teli (Shark Tank Pakistan), Sturgeon Capital, Dastak Ventures, Fatima Gobi Ventures, i2i Ventures, Alpha Beta Core, Keenu, and others showed up at NIC Hyderabad's Investor Summit, our biggest and most impactful yet. The message was clear: Hyderabad has emerged as a serious hub for innovation and investment.



## BEYOND TRADITIONAL VC

PSX held its first in-person startup roundtable with an incubation center, selecting a NIC Hyderabad startup to explore alternative funding and GEM Board public listing opportunities beyond large corporations.

# MENTORS WHO TRANSFORMED

In 2025, NIC Hyderabad founders worked with a wide network of mentors across strategy, growth, legal readiness, and execution. Among them, Hassan Syed led a three-day Elite Startup Bootcamp focused on founder mindset and execution. Asad Abdulla guided startups on building strategic partnerships, while Ali Raheel supported founders in strengthening their digital marketing and growth strategies. Dr. Owais Shaikh conducted full-day sessions on IP protection, helping founders build with legal clarity from day one. One-on-one engagements with Atif Raees Khan addressed individual growth challenges, and Mohsin Kareem shared practical insights drawn from the Shark Tank experience. These sessions were part of a much broader mentorship ecosystem, designed





# STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Building an ecosystem means connecting the dots between education, industry, and entrepreneurship.



## SZABIST HYDERABAD MOU

Building founders before they graduate. This MoU opens doors for SZABIST Hyderabad students to engage with real-world startup mentorship, programs, and incubation, closing the gap between academic potential and entrepreneurial opportunity.

## HYDERABAD CHAMBER PARTNERSHIP

Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders & Small Industry joined as Outreach Partner, connecting traditional businesses with innovation and expanding ecosystem reach across Sindh.



## STARTUP COLLABORATIONS

In 2025, founders actively partnered across sectors, turning shared challenges into shared solutions. From GriftX and Nettetax aligning financial literacy with tax compliance, to Sutta Cloth Store and Aagaz Studio joining forces in fashion and textiles, and Global Animal Passport collaborating with Agri Revolution on livestock innovation, these partnerships show what happens when startups build together.

# COMMUNITY: THE HEART OF EVERYTHING

Because startups aren't just about business plans. They're about humans building something together.

## GEW 2025: FIVE DAYS

Workshops, competitions, live music, yoga, and open mics. From Bachaapreneur to Founder Fiesta, founders explored ideas, built skills, and celebrated wins. Sessions on unit economics and life skills made the learning real, while Entrepreneur of the Week awards highlighted standout efforts. Five days. Endless energy. One big family.



## PINKTOBER: IN PINK WE RISE

Zumba, healing circles, and shared stories of strength. Women wrote, released, and reclaimed their power. Together with SheVows and Women Chamber of Commerce, we celebrated self-care, sisterhood, and rising in pink.



## TAKING NICH TO STUDENTS

We didn't wait for students to come to us, we went to them. Workshops, founder panels, and problem-solving challenges across Mehran, LUMHS, SZABIST, NUML, Iqra, Everest, SABS, and more, showing students they can start building here, today.



## FOUNDERS ON THE SHORE

Not every breakthrough happens at a desk. On this beach day, founders found time to breathe, connect, and just be themselves. It was a reminder that the journey of building a startup is about people, relationships, and shared moments.

## THE NUMBERS DON'T LIE

Over 300 founders applied. 25 startups inducted, 24% women-led. 50 founders through EvolvX Batches 2 and 3. Six investor summits. International showcases from Kuala Lumpur to Europe to Africa. But here's what matters more: Every single founder who walked through our doors left different. More confident. More connected. More ready to build something that lasts.



# WHAT 2025 TAUGHT US

Because startups aren't just about business plans. They're about humans building something together.

## BUILDING ISN'T LINEAR AND THAT'S OKAY

Some founders raised millions. Others are still figuring out product-market fit. Some got national TV coverage. Others are quietly building in their spaces. Success looks different for everyone, but the common thread? They all chose to start. They all chose to keep going. And they all realized they didn't have to do it alone.



## HYDERABAD ISN'T WAITING ANYMORE

For years, the narrative was clear: if you want to build something big, leave. Go to Karachi. Move to Lahore. But 2025 flipped that script. LOADe won national awards. Pak BioEnergy secured PKR 20M. Animal Passport went on every major news channel. The investors came here. The media came here. The world is paying attention, and we're just getting started.



# 2026: WE'RE NOT SLOWING DOWN

Cohort 8 applications are open. EvolvX Batch 4 is launching. More investor summits. More international showcases. More founders choosing to build the impossible.

*The question isn't "Can you build in Hyderabad?" anymore. The question is: What are you waiting for?*




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