

# NEWSLETTER

MONTHLY UPDATES FROM THE  
TELANGANA INNOVATION CELL

GRASSROOTS INNOVATION    SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP    GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIPS    ECOSYSTEM



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## WHAT'S INSIDE

*Empowering Grassroots  
Innovation: Warangal  
Innovators get a boost at  
'Innovation Panchayat'*

*TGIC and Bosch Partner to  
Deploy Smart Mobility  
Solutions for Visually  
Impaired*

*Bridging the Gap between  
Corporate Giants and Startup  
Ecosystem: T-Incubators - GCC  
Connect*

EMPOWERING  
GRASSROOTS INNOVATION:

# WARANGAL INNOVATORS GET A BOOST AT 'INNOVATION PANCHAYAT'

Telangana Innovation Cell (TGIC) successfully organized the 'Innovation Panchayat' on February 13, 2026, at the Warangal IT Tower, serving as a vital bridge between local talent and the state's premier startup ecosystem. Led by TGIC CEO Meraj Faheem and supported by representatives from the District Industries Cell, the initiative drew over 150 aspiring entrepreneurs, students, and rural innovators from Warangal, Hanumakonda, Janagaon, and Mahabubabad. By partnering with four key host institutions, Vaagdevi College of Engineering, Christu Jyothi Institute of Science & Technology, JNTUH Mahabubabad, and Sumathi Reddy Institute of Technology—the program brought professional resources directly to the district to ensure that geographic distance from the capital does not hinder the growth of homegrown ideas.



During the event, the consultation was divided into specialized tracks such as Agriculture, Education, Livelihood, Health, and Technology, where 12 subject matter experts provided hands-on mentoring. This walk-in platform allowed participants to showcase prototypes and engage in comprehensive sessions regarding idea validation, funding strategies, and market-entry barriers. One-on-one sessions helped innovators fix technical issues and develop scaling strategies, effectively bridging the gap between local grassroots creativity and state-run support programs.

Building on the momentum from previous successes in Hyderabad, Mahabubnagar, and Karimnagar, the Warangal edition focused on unlocking the vast potential of local talent through decentralized support. By scaling this proven blueprint, TGIC is empowering entrepreneurs to overcome challenges in product development and market compliance regardless of their location. This initiative reinforces the state's commitment to nurturing a culture of innovation across every corner of Telangana, ensuring that the brightest minds in the districts have the same opportunities to succeed as those in the capital.



# INNOVATION PANCHAYAT BRINGS EXPERT MENTORSHIP TO NIZAMABAD

Telangana Innovation Cell (TGIC) successfully hosted the 'Innovation Panchayat' on February 28, 2026, at the Nizamabad IT Tower, continuing its mission to decentralize support for rural talent. This initiative serves as a vital bridge, providing local entrepreneurs from Nizamabad, Nirmal, and Kamareddy districts with direct access to the premier startup ecosystem typically centered in the capital. By uniting institutional support with grassroots creativity, the program drew over 50 aspiring entrepreneurs, students, and small business owners, all eager to transform their local ideas into scalable ventures.

The event was designed as a high-impact, walk-in platform where the cohort was divided into specialized tracks such as Agriculture, Education, Livelihood, Health, and Technology. To guide their progress, nine subject matter experts from the Telangana innovation ecosystem provided hands-on mentoring, addressing critical queries on idea validation, funding strategies, marketing, and prototyping. Participants had the unique opportunity to showcase their prototypes and receive practical advice on everything from product development to market compliance, ensuring that geographic distance from Hyderabad no longer stalls a good idea.

The program made a tangible difference by offering participants dedicated one-on-one time with mentors to troubleshoot technical issues and refine their business models. Beyond immediate feedback, the initiative helped bridge the gap between local talent and state-run programs that offer long-term support and resources. By bringing professional expertise directly to the district, TGIC is effectively lowering the barriers to entry for rural problem-solvers.

This decentralized approach ensures that the momentum of the innovation movement continues to grow across the state. The success of the day in Nizamabad reinforces the commitment to building a future where every innovator, regardless of their location, has the tools and the ecosystem necessary to succeed on a global scale. By providing a direct line to government resources and seasoned experts, the Innovation Panchayat is empowering the next generation of leaders to build the rural economy from the ground up.

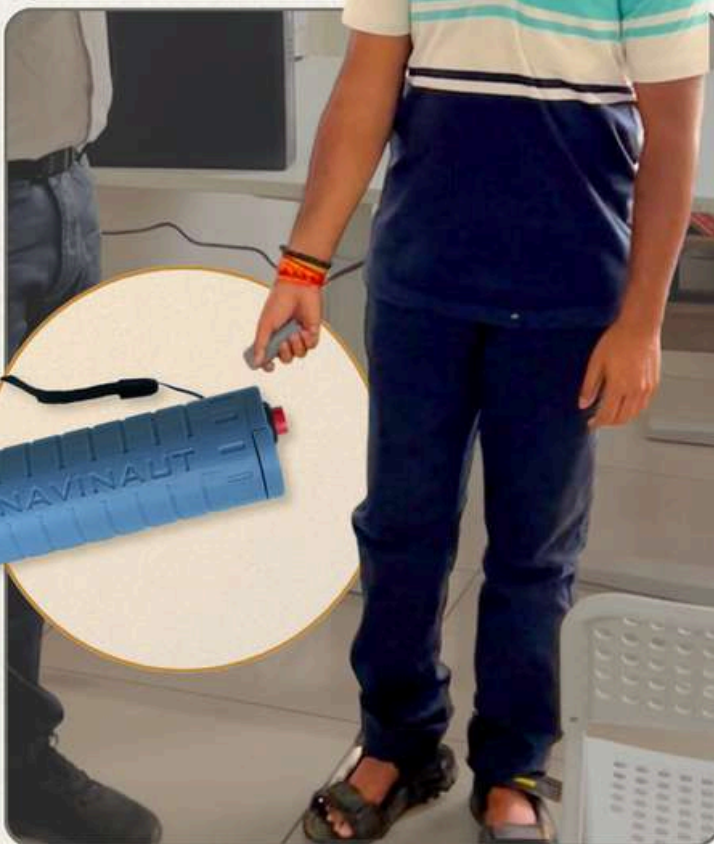


# TGIC AND BOSCH PARTNER TO DEPLOY SMART MOBILITY SOLUTIONS FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED



On February 28, 2026, a transformative step toward inclusive innovation was taken at the Youth4Jobs Training Center in Ameerpet, Hyderabad. Bosch Global Software Technologies, in partnership with the Telangana Innovation Cell (TGIC), T-Hub, and T-Works, launched the "Assistive Technologies for the Last Mile" Collaborative CSR Program. This initiative focuses on the deployment of Navinaut—a smart electronic navigation device developed by Alien Innovations—specifically designed to enhance the independent mobility of visually impaired individuals. During the launch event, 75 visually impaired youth received these devices, marking a significant milestone in bridging the accessibility gap through high-tech, scalable solutions.

The Navinaut device is a breakthrough in assistive design, featuring multi-directional obstacle detection through electronic sensing and real-time vibration alerts to ensure safe navigation. Designed for daily use, it boasts a 45-day battery life and a portable, user-friendly interface. For beneficiaries like Madhav, a visually impaired youth at the event, the technology represents more than just a tool; it is a source of dignity and freedom, allowing users to walk with confidence without relying on others for guidance. The emotional impact was evident as families expressed their gratitude for a program that translates complex innovation into a promise of a brighter, more independent future.



This initiative highlights the unique strength of Telangana's innovation ecosystem through a seamless collaborative model. While Bosch Global Software Technologies provided the essential CSR funding, TGIC oversaw the implementation and government coordination, supported by T-Hub's startup engagement and T-Works' expertise in product prototyping. On the ground, the Youth4Jobs Foundation played a critical role in mobilizing beneficiaries and executing the deployment. By uniting corporate responsibility, government facilitation, and startup ingenuity, the program serves as a replicable blueprint for delivering impactful technology to the communities that need it most.

Looking ahead, the Collaborative CSR Program aims to continue identifying and deploying innovations that address accessibility challenges across the state. The successful rollout of Navinaut is just the beginning of a broader vision to ensure that assistive technologies are affordable and accessible to every person in need. By fostering these public-private partnerships, Telangana is setting a national precedent for how technology can be harnessed to restore hope and independence to those often left behind in the "last mile" of development.



20 STATES, 600 FINALISTS & 30 CASH GRANTS:

# TGIC & YOUTH AID FOUNDATION REDEFINING RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AT YESUMMIT 2026 GRAND FINALE

The first week of February 2026 marked a historic milestone for India's grassroots startup ecosystem as Hyderabad transformed into the epicenter of national talent. From February 5th to 7th, the city proudly hosted the Grand Finale of the 9th Edition of the YES Summit, bringing together the brightest entrepreneurial minds from the grassroots from across the country.

A flagship initiative by the Youth Aid Foundation in strategic collaboration with TGIC, the summit was the culmination of a massive nationwide search for innovation. After providing localized support for the regional rounds at AIC-GNITS, TGIC was proud to see this journey peak at the prestigious ni-msme campus for a high-stakes three-day finale.



## A NATIONWIDE MOVEMENT IN NUMBERS

The scale of this year’s summit proved that the next big idea can come from anywhere. The event brought together a diverse cohort of problem-solvers.

# 600

**FINALISTS**

*High-potential entrepreneurs who emerged victorious from regional summits across **20 different states.***

# 15

**CATEGORIES**

*Ranging from sustainable agriculture and healthcare to deep-tech and social impact.*

# 30

**WINNING TEAMS**

*Top-tier innovators were awarded **cash grants as seed money** to transition from prototypes to scalable businesses.*

During the finale, **Meraj Faheem, CEO of TGIC**, delivered an inspiring address that challenged participants to look beyond the immediate pitch. He emphasized that the goal isn't just to build a startup, but to achieve excellence that resonates at a national level.

*"The landscape of recognition in India has changed," Meraj noted. "In the last 10 years, we have seen numerous grassroots innovators rise from humble beginnings to be honored with **Padma Awards**. My humble request to you is simple: excel so profoundly in your ventures that you become the next generation of national icons. There is no reason the grassroots entrepreneurs cannot be the future pride of this country."*



## THE ROAD AHEAD

The YES Summit 2026 Finale was not just the end of a competition; it was the beginning of a new chapter for 600 young leaders. With the signing of the MoU and the upcoming Innovation Yatra, TGIC is doubling down on its commitment to make Telangana a lighthouse for inclusive, grassroots innovation.

# TGIC & YOUTH AID FOUNDATION INK A STRATEGIC MOU TO DECENTRALIZE GRASSROOTS INNOVATION

While the YES Summit 2026 Finale celebrated the triumphs of 600 finalists, the most significant milestone for the future of Telangana’s startup ecosystem happened off-stage.

In a move to institutionalize support for rural talent, TGIC and the Youth Aid Foundation officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at bridging the gap between urban resources and grassroots ingenuity.

This partnership is built on the belief that a founder’s pincode should not determine the success of their potential. By combining TGIC’s institutional strength with Youth Aid Foundation’s deep community reach, the MoU sets a new standard for inclusive entrepreneurship in the state.

## THE WAY FORWARD: BRINGING THE ECOSYSTEM TO THE DISTRICTS DOORSTEP

Through this collaboration, TGIC and YouthAid Foundation aim to support **3,000 Grassroots entrepreneurs** over a period of **three years**, enabling access to mentorship, ecosystem linkages, capacity building and growth opportunities.



### DISTRICT OUTREACH

The new initiative born from this MoU is the **Innovation Yatra**. Recognizing that many rural talents lack the means to travel to Hyderabad for mentorship, the Yatra flips the script



### ON-THE-SPOT MENTORSHIP

Expert mentors, investors, and technical advisors will engage directly with local innovators in their own environments.



### TALENT DISCOVERY

The focus will be on massive scouting to identify ‘hidden gems’—grassroots innovators solving local problems with global potential.



## LOCALIZED INCUBATION: BRIDGING THE 'URBAN-RURAL' DIVIDE

The MoU goes beyond the roadshow of events. It focuses on building a permanent pipeline for innovative growth through Localized Incubation support.



### INFRASTRUCTURE ACCESS:

Establishing touchpoints in districts where entrepreneurs can access the same high-quality infrastructure and digital tools found in major tech hubs.



### TAILORED SEED FUNDING:

Creating specific pathways for district-level startups to access seed money, helping them navigate the crucial "valley of death" between a prototype and a market-ready product.



### COMPLIANCE & IP SUPPORT:

Providing rural founders with the legal and intellectual property frameworks needed to protect their inventions and scale ethically.



**Mathew Mattam**  
Chairperson,  
Youth Aid Foundation



**Meraj Faheem**  
Chief Executive Officer, Telangana  
Innovation Cell (TGIC)

The signing of this MoU signals a shift from event-based support to system-based empowerment. By decentralizing the startup ecosystem, TGIC and Youth Aid Foundation are ensuring that the next wave of 'Padma-level' innovators doesn't just come from the cities, but from every village and town across Telangana.



BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN CORPORATE GIANTS AND STARTUP ECOSYSTEM:

# T-INCUBATORS - GCC CONNECT

At TGIC, in our role as the ecosystem enabler in the state of Telangana, we are driven by a singular, persistent mission:

**TO MAXIMIZE THE IMPACT OF INCUBATORS TO TRULY ACCELERATE THE NEXT WAVE OF STARTUPS**

Since its inception, the incubator ecosystem has thrived within its own circles. Month after month, we have hosted roundtable sessions that serve as a vital sanctuary for enablers—a space where we speak the same language, share the same struggles, and co-create solutions. While these gatherings are both comfortable and safe, we recognize that true impact lies beyond them.

Through a series of consistent discourse and feedback at our monthly roundtables, we have realized a fundamental truth: an incubator's growth and systemic impact only reach their peak when they venture into uncharted territories and diversify beyond the usual.



**Jai Shankar Sharma**  
Chairperson,  
Startup Master Class (SMC) and IIT  
Kanpur Alumni Association



**Meraj Faheem**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Telangana Innovation Cell (TGIC)



**Venkat Kumar Siddineni**  
Principal Consultant –  
Business Support, KONE



**Gaurav Luthra**  
President,  
AMA Global Technology Inc



**Sanjay Shukla**  
Co-Founder and GCC Strategy Lead,  
Grow GCC by SSU Ventures



## BREAKING THE CIRCLE: WHEN INCUBATORS SAT ACROSS THE GCCS

This month, we decided to change the frequency of the room. We stepped out of our 'closed circle' and invited Global Capability Centers (GCCs) to the table. For the first time, we sat corporate giants side-by-side with startup ecosystem builders.

The shift in energy was immediate. When these two worlds collided, two major realizations came to the forefront:



### SCALABILITY MEETS SOUL

*GCCs possess immense global reach and infrastructure, while startups possess raw speed and agility. When these forces align, the dialogue shifts. It's no longer a dry conversation about "vendor agreements"—it becomes a visionary discussion on Co-creation. That synergy is where the real magic of innovation lives.*



### MARKET = ULTIMATE MENTOR

*In the startup world, we often spend an exhausted amount of time chasing "funding." However, the queries in this room were different. The focus shifted to Market Access. We realized that a "Made in Telangana" solution has the power to solve a global corporate bottleneck. The right partnership can be more valuable than the biggest check.*

## KEY TAKEAWAYS: HOW STARTUPS CAN BRIDGE THE GCC GAP

During the roundtable, several insights emerged for incubators looking to work with corporate giants:

- **Solve for the Bottleneck, Not the Budget:** GCCs look for solutions that fix specific operational pain points rather than just "cool tech."
- **Compliance is a Currency:** Being 'enterprise-ready' with basic legal and data security standards makes you a much more attractive partner.
- **The 'Pilot' Mindset:** Focus on getting a Proof of Concept (PoC) right. A successful pilot within a GCC is the fastest way to global scalability.

## A COMMUNITY OF ENABLERS

This pivotal dialogue was made possible by the bridges built by our partners. A massive 'Thank You' to the Startup Masterclass Team and the IIT Kanpur Alumni Association for being the vital link between these sectors.

A special heartfelt thanks to the IIT Kanpur Alum Veteran Jai Shankar Sharma, the chairperson of StartupMasterclass (SMC). With whose support, we fueled this pivotal dialogue that will ripple through the ecosystem for months to come.

To our incredible enablers: thank you for being the 'constants' we can always count on. TGIC is where it is because you are always just one call away.



# NEWSLETTER TEAM

## SPECIAL THANKS

**Meraj Faheem,**  
CEO - TGIC

## THE EDITORIAL TEAM

**Sahil Suman,** *Lead-Communications*  
**Vani Buddhavarapu,** *Manager-Public Relations*

## VISUALS AND DESIGNS

**Sumayya Fatima,**  
*Designer*



## ABOUT TGIC

**Telangana Innovation Cell** (herein referred to as TGIC) is an initiative by the Information Technology and Industries & Commerce Department, Government of Telangana. TGIC was set up in 2017 under the State Innovation Policy with a vision— to build and nurture the Culture of Innovation in the State of Telangana. Today, it acts as the first response of the State Government for identified grassroots innovators, start-ups, entrepreneurs, and innovation catalysts to foster an inclusive innovation ecosystem with State-as-a-whole-approach.

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**TGIC**  
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