

## Startup Mela 5.0 at St. Joseph's University, Bengaluru

**Startup Mela 5.0:** The Nexus was organised by the Entrepreneurship Development Cell (EDC) and the Institution's Innovation Council (IIC) of St. Joseph's University, Bengaluru, on 13 March 2026 at the University campus.

Aimed at fostering ideation, problem-solving, and start-up development, the programme featured a vibrant mix of exhibition stalls, demo booths, competitions, and panel discussions. It provided participants with an excellent platform not only to present their ideas and receive valuable feedback from experts, but also to connect with mentors, investors, and industry leaders. The event attracted an impressive 5,000+ visitors, with 22 start-ups showcasing innovations ranging from herbal drinks and technology solutions to clothing and scientific products.

The event was inaugurated by Shri Kishor Jagirdar, President of Vision Karnataka Foundation, Chairman and Managing Director of Infopace Management, angel investor, TEDx speaker, start-up mentor, and innovator.

Following the inauguration, the event featured two engaging panel discussions.

The first session, on the theme "Building Innovation and Sustainable Business", brought together eminent industry experts, including Ms Nisha Ninan, Social Innovator; Mr Daniel Madapur, Founder of The Edge; Mr Nazarious Manoharan, Brand and Creative Consultant; and Mr Selvam George, Chairman of *5e Serpraise*. The session was moderated by Ms. Luvena Rangel, DEIAB Branding and Communication Strategist at Abedent.

The second session, titled "Building Careers in the Age of AI – What Should Students Look For?", focused on the evolving career landscape in the age of artificial intelligence. It was moderated by Mr. Sudhir Murthy, CEO of *InferWorks*, and featured distinguished panellists Mr. Naveen Belavadi, CEO of *IGS Global*; Mr. Chethan Shirnali, Member of the Governing Council at *AIC NITTE*; and Mr. Harsha K. J., Cyber Security Officer at *Microsoft*.

The Pitching Competition, one of the event's major attractions, provided students with a platform to showcase their innovation and problem-solving skills. The competition received enthusiastic appreciation from the judges. The winning teams, Biolean and Trana, were awarded a total cash prize of ₹10,000.

Another highlight of the event was "Brandstormers," a dynamic competition that encouraged students to think creatively and innovatively. Participants were tasked with creating and presenting a marketable product based on an assigned brand. Out of nine participating teams, the team that conceptualised the creative combination of Lamborghini and Matchbox secured first place, while the team that presented the innovative idea of combining Amul with a toothpick secured second place.

In the lead-up to the event, a three-day certified online Startup Bootcamp, powered by the Wadhvani Foundation, was conducted from 11 to 13 March 2026.

The valedictory function was graced by entrepreneur Shri C. M. Patil, CEO of Krishikalpa, Founding CEO of Deshpande Startups, Managing Director of Anvesana TBI, and a noted entrepreneur. Addressing the students, he shared his inspiring journey from aspiring to become a Mechanical Engineer to evolving into an entrepreneur, ecosystem builder, startup mentor, and investor.

He reminded students that entrepreneurship is not merely about glory, money, or fame, but about solving problems. Emphasising the spirit of entrepreneurship, he said, *“If any of you have the ability to see any problem as an opportunity, then I think there is an entrepreneur in you.”* He further stressed the importance of nurturing entrepreneurs in India, especially from rural areas, and observed that such efforts are essential for India to emerge as a developed nation.

The programme concluded with a musical performance by the University’s Indian Music Association, ‘Kalah’.

The immense success of the event and the distinguished guest line-up were made possible through the dedicated efforts of the Advisory Board, comprising Prof. S. Madheswaran, former Director of ISEC; Dr. A. V. Manjunatha, Head of CEENER, ISEC; Mr. Prasad Chandran, former Chairman and Managing Director of BASF; Dr. Srinath T. L., CEO and Director of GenoPhe; Dr. Nirupama M. P., Associate Professor at BML Munjal University and Founder & CEO of Vinibrawn Healthcare Solutions; and Mr. Shravan Guduthur, Chairman of the Manthan Committee, FKCCI.

Startup Mela 5.0: The Nexus stood as a resounding success, reinforcing St. Joseph’s University’s commitment to innovation, entrepreneurship, and industry-academia collaboration, while inspiring students to transform ideas into impactful ventures.

For the Images of the Startup Mela 5.0 at St. Joseph’s University, Bengaluru, kindly refer to the Photo Gallery: <https://sju.edu.in/gallery/135>