LOWKEY TECH 2026

STARTUP & AI HACKATHON

ONLINE ROUND PARTICIPANT GUIDE

48-HOUR ONLINE CHALLENGE
December 5–6, 2026

■299 per participant
Teams of 2–5 · Pan-India participation

Shortlist announcement: December 16, 2026
Offline grand finale: December 19–20, 2026 · Hyderabad

Official guide to the challenge, tracks, eligibility, registration, submission, evaluation, rules and FAQs.

1. About LOWKEY TECH

LOWKEY TECH 2026 is a pan-India Startup & AI Hackathon for students, aspiring founders and developers to turn real-world problems into practical AI-powered solutions. The online round is the first stage: teams work through a 48-hour challenge, then submit their project for evaluation and shortlisting.

Important dates

Online challenge	December 5–6, 2026
Shortlist announcement	December 16, 2026
Offline grand finale	December 19–20, 2026 · Hyderabad

The announced offline venue is Sri Sai Luxury Heaven Retreat, Hyderabad. The exact address and on-site instructions will be shared with shortlisted teams.

2. Eligibility & Team Requirements

- **Who can participate:** Students, aspiring founders and developers from across India.
- **Team size:** 2–5 members. Teams of two are allowed; solo/individual registration is not permitted.
- **Online registration fee:** ■299 per participant. This fee covers Round 1 only.
- **Offline fee:** Shortlisted participants attending the finale pay an additional ■699 per person.
- **Team continuity:** The same team members are expected to continue to the offline finale. Changes require exceptional organizer approval.

3. Challenge Theme & Tracks

Main challenge: Build Your Own AI-Powered Startup. Identify a meaningful problem faced by people, communities or businesses and build an innovative AI-powered solution. Explain the target user, practical value and potential for real-world adoption.

- **AI in Healthcare:** Patient support, care coordination and health access.
- **FinTech & Smart Finance:** Financial inclusion, budgeting, fraud awareness and finance workflows.
- **Smart Cities & Sustainability:** Traffic, waste, water, energy and public services.
- **EdTech & Future Learning:** Personalized learning, accessibility and skill development.
- **AgriTech & Rural Innovation:** Agriculture, farmer support and rural services.
- **Cybersecurity & Digital Safety:** Privacy, threat awareness and online safety.
- **AI & Business Automation:** Productivity, operations and small-business workflows.
- **Open Innovation:** Any other meaningful problem where AI can create value.

4. What You Should Build

Your submission should clearly explain the problem, demonstrate what the solution does and provide evidence of your work. A working prototype or demo is encouraged. Projects should show meaningful implementation, not only an idea or slide deck.

- Define the problem and the people affected.
- Explain the proposed solution, key features and user journey.
- Show where AI is used and why it adds value.
- Describe the technology stack, architecture or workflow.
- Explain practical impact and business/startup potential.

5. Submission Requirements

Submit through the official LOWKEY TECH Google Form. The organizers will share the form link. LinkedIn posts or messages are not official submissions.

Prepare the following:

- **Project title and team details:** Project name and details of every team member.
- **Selected track:** Choose the most relevant track.
- **Problem statement and solution:** Explain the problem, target users and approach.
- **Project document:** Include objectives, features, tech stack, implementation details, target users, workflow, business potential and expected impact.
- **Presentation video:** In English, submitted through the Google Form. Explain the problem, solution, AI usage, demo/prototype and team contribution.
- **GitHub/repository link:** Include if available.
- **Demo/prototype/deployment link:** Include if available.
- **AI usage declaration:** List AI tools/platforms used and explain how they contributed.

Before submitting, verify team details, document and video links, video permissions and AI declaration. Late or incomplete submissions may be disqualified. Keep your submission confirmation.

6. AI Tools & Pre-Built Projects

- AI tools, model APIs, coding assistants, agents and external AI platforms are allowed.
- Vibe Coding and AI-assisted coding workflows are permitted.
- Participants are responsible for paid tools, subscriptions and API usage costs.
- Pre-built projects are allowed only when teams demonstrate substantial new work, meaningful improvements or added features.
- Disclose pre-existing components, third-party tools, datasets, APIs and AI assistance.

Teams remain responsible for understanding, testing and presenting their work. Do not claim third-party or AI-generated work as entirely your own.

7. Evaluation & Judging

Criterion	Weight
AI-First Execution	25%
Product Innovation	20%
Functionality & Execution	20%
Market Potential	15%
AI Usage & Workflow	10%
Demo & Pitch	10%
Total	**100%**

Judges evaluate submissions against these criteria. Shortlisting follows the organizers' evaluation process; the shortlist is scheduled for December 16, 2026. Organizers may request clarification or a project demonstration. Evaluation and selection decisions are final.

8. Benefits & Progression

- **Online round:** Official digital participation E-Certificate, subject to participation and submission requirements.

- **Internship opportunities:** May be offered to eligible and outstanding participants, subject to evaluation and availability; not guaranteed.
- **Offline finale:** Shortlisted teams may attend the 24-hour finale in Hyderabad. On-site arrangements include workspace, Wi-Fi, meals, snacks, refreshments, mentorship, networking, event goodies and certificate, subject to event arrangements.

9. Prize Pool

Prize Pool: TBA. A prize/investment pool of up to ■1,00,000 is planned, subject to sponsorship finalization. The final amount, categories, eligibility and distribution will be announced by the organizers. This is not a confirmed guaranteed award.

10. Rules & Code of Conduct

- Provide accurate registration and team information; team size must be 2–5. Solo entries are not accepted.
- The same registered team is expected to continue to the offline finale; changes need exceptional organizer approval.
- Submit original work or disclose all pre-existing work and third-party resources.
- Respect intellectual property, privacy, confidentiality and the rights of others.
- Do not submit harmful, illegal, deceptive or unsafe applications.
- Participants bear the costs of paid AI tools, subscriptions and API usage.
- Late, incomplete, misleading or unverifiable submissions may be rejected or disqualified.
- Organizers may request additional information or a demonstration to verify project work.
- **Refunds:** Registration fees are strictly non-refundable and non-transferable.
- **Intellectual property:** Participants retain ownership of their original ideas, source code, designs and IP. LOWKEY TECH does not claim ownership.
- **Media/privacy:** Participant photos, videos, interviews and demos will not be used for promotional/marketing purposes by default. Explicit consent will be obtained before external promotional use of identifiable participant content.

11. Frequently Asked Questions

Who can participate?

Students, aspiring founders and developers from anywhere in India.

Can I register alone?

No. Register in a team of 2–5 members.

Can a team have two members?

Yes, two-member teams are permitted.

What is the online fee?

■299 per participant for Round 1.

Does ■299 include the offline finale?

No. Shortlisted participants attending the finale pay an additional ■699 per person.

When is the online challenge?

December 5–6, 2026, for 48 hours.

When is the shortlist announced?

December 16, 2026.

When and where is the finale?

December 19–20, 2026, at Sri Sai Luxury Heaven Retreat, Hyderabad. Further venue instructions will be shared.

How do we submit?

Use the official LOWKEY TECH Google Form. The organizers will share its link.

Can we submit on LinkedIn?

No. The Google Form is the official submission channel.

What language should the video use?

English.

Is GitHub compulsory?

Include a repository link if available; a demo/prototype link is also welcome if available.

Can we use ChatGPT or other AI tools?

Yes. AI tools, assistants, agents and external APIs are allowed; declare their use.

Is Vibe Coding allowed?

Yes, AI-assisted and Vibe Coding workflows are permitted.

Who pays for paid API usage?

Participants are responsible for paid tools, subscriptions and API costs.

Can we use an existing project?

Yes, if substantial new work or meaningful improvements are made and pre-built components are disclosed.

Can team members change after Round 1?

The same team is expected to continue; changes need exceptional organizer approval.

Will participants get an E-Certificate?

A digital participation certificate is intended for participants meeting participation and submission requirements.

Are internships guaranteed?

No. Opportunities may be offered based on evaluation and availability.

Is the prize pool confirmed?

No. It is TBA; up to ■1,00,000 is planned subject to sponsorship finalization.

Who owns the project?

Participants retain ownership of their original ideas, code, designs and IP.

Can I get a refund?

No. Fees are non-refundable and non-transferable.

Will my photo or demo be used for promotion?

Not by default. Explicit consent is required for external promotional use of identifiable content.

Is accommodation included?

No regular student accommodation is provided for the offline finale. Any exceptional assistance is subject to availability.

What if I have a submission issue?

Contact the organizers promptly, preferably before the submission deadline.

12. Contact the Organizing Team

Email: saivathan02@gmail.com
Phone / WhatsApp: +91 6303440601

Use official LOWKEY TECH communications for the Google Form link, deadlines, shortlist, venue instructions and updates. If information changes, the latest official organizer announcement will apply.

LOWKEY TECH 2026 · Think Beyond Code. Build Beyond Ideas.