



Press Release for immediate distribution

Punjab National Bank Launches PSB Hackathon 2026 with Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur

~A National Mission Towards Quantum-Ready Banking Systems ~

New Delhi, 21 February 2026: Punjab National Bank (PNB), nation's leading public sector bank, under the guidance of the Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance, Government of India, and in coordination with the Indian Banks' Association (IBA), has announced the launch of **PSB Hackathon 2026**, its flagship annual national innovation initiative aimed at strengthening cybersecurity across Public Sector Banks (PSBs). The hackathon has now evolved into a structured national platform that brings together academia, industry, and the banking sector to collaboratively address emerging cyber threats.

Continuing its strategic partnership with Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur, PNB is organising a nationwide hackathon series in 2026 focused on building next-generation cyber resilience. The theme for this year, "Quantum-Proof Systems for Public-Facing Applications," reflects forward-looking approach to safeguarding its digital financial infrastructure against the emerging risks posed by quantum computing. As global advancements in quantum technologies accelerate, proactive preparedness of the cryptographic systems to secure in a post-quantum era is need of hour.

The previous edition of the hackathon witnessed overwhelming participation from students across premier engineering colleges and universities nationwide. Under the theme "Code Against Malware," teams developed innovative solutions addressing real-world banking cybersecurity challenges, particularly ransomware threats. The initiative was widely recognized as a first-of-its-kind collaborative effort within the Indian banking sector. Notably, several prototypes developed during the previous hackathon are currently under evaluation for potential integration into the banking ecosystem, demonstrating the tangible impact of structured academia–industry collaboration.

PSB Hackathon 2026 will focus on developing a software-based cryptographic scanner designed to validate the implementation of quantum-resistant ciphers and generate a comprehensive Cryptographic Bill of Materials (CBOM) for public-facing applications. The proposed solution will assess cryptographic exposure across web servers, APIs, and other mission-critical digital interfaces within the banking ecosystem. Through this initiative, PNB aims to foster indigenous capabilities in post-quantum cryptography assessment and create scalable tools that enhance systemic resilience across Public Facing Applications.

The hackathon is open to students enrolled in recognized colleges, universities, and educational institutions across India. Participating teams must comprise a minimum

of three and a maximum of four members. Multidisciplinary teams with expertise in cybersecurity, cryptography, artificial intelligence, machine learning, and software development are strongly encouraged to ensure the development of comprehensive and innovative solutions. Winning teams will compete for prizes worth up to ₹11 lakhs.

Quantum computing represents both a technological breakthrough and a strategic cybersecurity challenge for the global financial sector. Through PSB Hackathon 2026, PNB seeks to proactively assess cryptographic readiness, promote the adoption of post-quantum cryptographic standards, and build indigenous solutions capable of securing India's public-facing banking systems against future quantum-enabled threats. The initiative aligns with the Government of India's vision of **Atmanirbhar Bharat in cybersecurity** and reinforces PNB's commitment to innovation-driven national security.

Registrations for PSB Hackathon 2026 can be done on the official PNB Hackathon portal- <https://pnb.bank.in/PSBs-Cybersecurity-Hackathon.html>. Detailed guidelines, evaluation criteria, datasets, and mentorship schedules will be released as part of the Hackathon Rulebook. Updates will also be available on PNB's official social media platforms. Queries may be addressed to hackathon@pnb.bank.in.

Making Indian Banking Quantum Safe – Together
