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Press Release

Himalayan Startup Trek 2018



IIT Mandi Catalyst, the first Technology Business Incubator (TBI) in the state of Himachal Pradesh, is organizing its annual flagship event “**Himalayan Startup Trek (HST)**” on April 28-29, 2018 at its scenic campus at Kamand. The HST 2018 aims to bring together stakeholders of Indian startup ecosystem. The major focus of this event will be towards enabling face-to-face contact between startups and investors, and even those who are still ideating their startup plans with the right mentors. The event will give an opportunity to startups to pitch their ideas for incubation support at IIT Mandi Catalyst that provides upto INR 15 Lakhs seed capital in addition to mentoring and infrastructural support to startups.

IIT Mandi Catalyst has become the flag bearer to develop startup ecosystem in the state the Himalayan region. Since its launch in May 2016, Catalyst has evaluated over 150-200 business plans, supported 15-20 startups, and committed INR 35-40 Lakhs in grants/investments to these startups. The incubator is currently mentoring ten entrepreneurial initiatives across a wide set of domains including healthcare, education, agrotech, road-safety, environment, and clean energy. Noteworthy achievements of Catalyst supported startups in last one year include selection of uG Fresh team for exhibition at Rashtrapati Bhavan in 2018, and Inspiring Women Entrepreneur of the year award 2017 (Orange Flower Awards) to Romita Ghosh, Founder of MedSamaan.



A number of startups are also migrating from big cities to IIT Mandi Catalyst to take advantage of facilities provided that include office space at affordable rates, mentoring and advisory on technology and business related matters, seed capital and access to IIT Mandi laboratories and much more. Clean environment, beauty of hills, no-long commutes and low cost of living in hills is beginning to catch the eyes of startups across India.

Supported by Department of Science and Technology (GoI) and HP State Government, Catalyst aims to enrich the startup ecosystem in the state and beyond. With Indian Government’s recent ‘Make in India’ and ‘Startup India’ initiatives, startups have witnessed a boom throughout India. The HST 2018 is an attempt to make sure that Himalayan region is no exception to it. This event brings together entrepreneurs, ideas, startups, investors, mentors, government bodies and enthusiasts interested in the startup scene to the hill state of Himachal Pradesh.

Last year, the HST 2017 saw participation from large number of startup enthusiasts, investors, industry experts and government officials who deliberated on a range of startups related issues. Fifteen handpicked startups out of over 100 applications pitched to a jury and five selected teams were offered incubation support at Catalyst.



Startup showcasing their product



Budding entrepreneurs pitching their startups at IIT Mandi Catalyst

The 2nd edition of HST (HST 2018) will have a much larger scale and outreach. In addition to curated panel discussions on varied topics, HST 2018 will feature “MVP Boot-Camp” for

Idea stage startups, “Investors’ Den” for startups looking to raise seed funds, “Meet a Mentor” session for one-to-one Q&A with tech-business experts, and personal interactions with IIT Mandi faculty for aspiring entrepreneurs seeking technical guidance. Apart from these planned events, legal and financial advisors will be available on campus for consultation and guidance.

The HST 2018 event will showcase expert speakers who have excelled in making their startup dream a reality. For example, Dr. Hemant Kanakia, entrepreneur, startup investor, and advisor to young entrepreneurs, will be the keynote speaker at the event. Mr. H.K. Mittal, Adviser, Member Secretary, National Science & Technology Entrepreneurship Development Board, DST (GoI) will also deliver a special address. The other speakers include Prof. Bringi Dev from IIM Bangalore, Karthik Padmanabhan from Google India, Shalini Puchalapalli from Amazon, Manish Kheterpal from WaterBridge Ventures, Bhavesh Manglani from Delhivery and several others. These professionals will discuss entrepreneurial issues and solutions for the startups to emulate.

As part of HST 2018, pitches will be made for incubation by idea stage startups as well as for investment funding by established startups. There will also a workshop on taking a business model from an idea to a product that is ready to be placed in the market. Budding startups will get opportunities to display their prototypes to the attending investors during startup exhibition during the event. Apart from the above, those who are still thinking about creating a startup of their own or are just interested in the innovations being presented at the event are welcome to attend.

HST 2018 has received Gold sponsorship from firms such as Google India and the Himachal Pradesh Centre for Entrepreneurship Development. However, the event provides an open opportunity for other sponsors to join hands and become a part of this initiative. The last date for registering for the HST 2018 is 7th April 2018 and registration can be done on this link: <https://goo.gl/kiXSLG>.

Important links:

- HST 2018 event page: www.iitmandi.ac.in/Catalyst/HST
- IIT Mandi Catalyst page: www.iitmandicatalyst.in
- Message from Board of Catalyst: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p014QnkbZM>
- Message from Startup Teams of Catalyst: <https://youtu.be/RndXrW-Sifg>
- Some highlights of HST 2017: <https://goo.gl/vhNXqH>

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