



PRESS RELEASE

Shri Rajesh Kumar Prajapati, Director, Dept. of Industries, H.P., flags off the Startup Exploration Batch at IIT Mandi Catalyst

MANDI, 2nd August 2021: [Indian Institute of Technology \(IIT\) Mandi](#) Catalyst started its 2nd Startup Exploration programme of 2021 with Shri Rajesh Kumar Prajapati, Director, Dept. of Industries, H.P., virtually flagging off the programme. Along with the chief guest, the virtual event was graced by the esteemed presence of Prof. Ajit K. Chaturvedi, Director, IIT Mandi; Mr. Samir Shah, Managing Partner, Peak Ventures, and faculty members of IIT Mandi.

As many as 23 startup teams including 11 from Himachal Pradesh working in sectors including Waste Management, Agrotech, Healthtech, Enterprise Management, and Cleantech participated in the inaugural session.

The event began with an address by Prof. Ajit K. Chaturvedi, Director, IIT Mandi. While welcoming the participants Prof. Chaturvedi said, “This is an opportunity for all the startups to make the best use of resources and assistance provided by IIT Mandi Catalyst while you build your startup over the next few months.”

The guest of honor, Shri. Prajapati encouraged the startups teams from various parts of the country and congratulated them on their brave decision to start a venture. He mentioned to the entrepreneurs that Himachal Pradesh got seventh rank in the country for ‘Ease of doing Business’ in 2019 by the Ministry of Finance.

“On completing your incubation programme at IIT Mandi Catalyst, I invite all the young entrepreneurs to get the benefits of the ecosystem developed by the Dept. of Industries in Himachal Pradesh”, **said Shri Prajapati.**

He ensured the continued support from Himachal Pradesh Centre for Entrepreneurship Development. Along with this, the Chief guest lauded the initiatives taken by IIT Mandi Catalyst to support budding entrepreneurs who are coming to Himachal with various business ideas and finding practical solutions for the community, state and other parts of the country.

Mr. Samir Shah, Managing Partner, Peak Ventures, shared his views with startups on how to make ideas successful. He suggested that the entrepreneurs should choose tough problems to solve and eventually the solutions will help them to grow their business exponentially. He emphasized on the need of entrepreneurs to be flexible and adaptable to the situations.



The 23 startups selected by IIT Mandi Catalyst will go through a rigorous training and mentoring process over the next three months after which they will present their refined ideas on a demo-day. Most suitable ideas will be further supported by IIT Mandi Catalyst through a one year program under various funding schemes.

It is noteworthy that IIT Mandi Catalyst has supported about 140 startups in eight startup batches till now and this will be the ninth batch of startups in the last five years. Earlier this year, IIT Mandi Catalyst was given the responsibility by the State government to distribute INR 10 Cr under the Him Startup Yojana that provides up to INR 50 Lakhs to the startups for commercialization.

About IIT Mandi Catalyst

Launched in 2016, Catalyst is supported by the Department of Science and Technology [GoI], HPCED, and MeitY. Catalyst provides incubation support to technology-based startups focused on creating value and impact in the economic and/or social sectors. Catalyst is the first incubator in HP and has supported over 140 startups that have created about 500 employment opportunities. Over 35 awards and recognitions have been achieved by these startups. The incubator has hosted more than 100 workshops/mentoring sessions. Catalyst hosts three seed fund schemes, three grant schemes, and two state-run schemes for startups at various stages of their venture.

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About IIT Mandi

Since the first batch of 97 students joined in July 2009, IIT Mandi has grown to currently host 125 faculty and 1,833 students who are enrolled in various programmes of studies in undergraduate, postgraduate and research programmes, and 1516 alumni. IIT Mandi is a fully residential campus with 1.4 lakh sq. m. buildings completed. It has a guest house with 88 rooms, a 750-seater Auditorium, campus school, sports complex and hospital.

IIT Mandi has four Academic Schools and three major Research Centers. The Schools are: School of Computing and Electrical Engineering, School of Basic Sciences, School of Engineering, and School of Humanities and Social Sciences. The Centers are: Advanced Materials Research Centre (AMRC; set up with an investment of Rs. 60 crores), Centre for Design and Fabrication of Electrical Devices (C4DFED; has Rs. 50 crores worth of fabrication tools), and BioX Centre (has acquired research equipment worth Rs. 15 crores). In 2017, the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India, selected IIT Mandi to lead the prestigious Rs. 10 crore FarmerZone® Project.

To cater to the growing and changing needs of the Indian industry and the aspirations of students, IIT Mandi has introduced 7 B.Tech., 7 M.Tech., 5 M.Sc., 4 Ph.D., 1 I-Ph.D and 1 M.A programmes in the past 10 years. The unique, project-oriented B.Tech. curriculum is centred around its 4-year long Design and Innovation stream. From August 2019, IIT Mandi started 3 new and unique B. Tech. programmes in Data Science and Engineering, Engineering Physics, and Dual Degree in Bioengineering.



Since the inception of the Institute, IIT Mandi faculty have been involved in over 275 Research and Development (R&D) projects worth more than Rs. 120 crore. In the past 10 years, the Institute has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with 11 international and 12 national universities.

IIT Mandi Catalyst, the first Technology Business Incubator in Himachal Pradesh, has helped over 75 startups since 2017 and is changing both the industry profile and entrepreneurial mindset in the state. So far, Catalyst has secured external funding of Rs. 24 crores from various funding agencies. Enabling Women of Kamand Valley (EWOK) is another innovative programme run by IIT Mandi, which focuses on imparting skills training to rural women to start village-scale businesses.

Recently, IIT Mandi set up the IIT Mandi iHub and HCI Foundation (iHub; a section-8 company) on its campus at Kamand with significant funding of INR 110 crores from the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India. The iHub is planned to fuel research and technology development, skill development, startup and innovation, and collaborations in the HCI and allied AI/ML areas in India. The iHub and its activities were inaugurated by the honorable Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh, Shri Jai Ram Thakur, on IIT Mandi's 12th Foundation Day on 24th February 2021.

IIT Mandi has been ranked no. 31 in the Engineering Institutions Category in the [India Rankings 2020](#) released by National Institutional Ranking Framework, Ministry of Education, Govt. of India. Apart from this, IIT Mandi is the only second-generation IIT to be featured at rank no. 7 in the Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements of the Innovation Cell, Ministry of Education, Govt. of India.

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