

# Incubator to help start-ups in health, environment sectors

■ NT NETWORK

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The Birla Institute of Technology and Science (BITS) Pilani K K Birla Goa campus has set up an incubator with financial support of Rs 3 crore from the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), a not-for-profit public sector enterprise, set up by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), government of India.

With the 3500 square feet of state-of-the-art facility, the BITS BIRAC BioNEST Lab will help the start-ups in health and environment sector by providing them equipment, space and supporting facilities to test their ideas, prototype in the lab and take it to the market.

Vice Chancellor of Goa University prof Varun Sahni will inaugurate this BITS BIRAC BioNEST Startup In-

cubator cum Innovation Lab at BITS Pilani K K Birla Goa campus on January 3. The function will be presided over by director of BITS Pilani K K Birla Goa campus Prof G Raghurama and will include an expert panel discussion on 'Opportunities in Healthcare'. Experts will include head of Oncology Department Manipal Hospitals Goa Dr Shekhar Salkar besides Dr N Sriram, Dr Praveen Khullar, Dr Manish Diwan and V Joshi.

The BITS BIRAC BioNEST Lab focuses in the area of health and environment nurture innovations in areas that can create products which will not only have great market potential but also provide a solution to several pressing problems that are modern day challenges to mankind. Incubation support includes startup incubation, laboratory (workbenches and

equipment), office space and common infrastructure, legal and IPR services, mentorship and training, sample testing and analysis, and consultancy.

BIRAC promotes industry-academia interface and implements its mandate through a wide range of impact initiatives, be it providing access to risk capital through targeted funding, technology transfer, IP management and handholding schemes that help bring innovation excellence to the biotech firms and make them globally competitive. In its five years of existence, BIRAC has initiated several schemes, networks and platforms that help to bridge the existing gaps between the industry-academia and take socially useful products to the market. The startup ecosystem in India is growing at a fast pace.