

Prof Sahni hails joint research by GU, BITS faculty members and researchers

BY A REPORTER

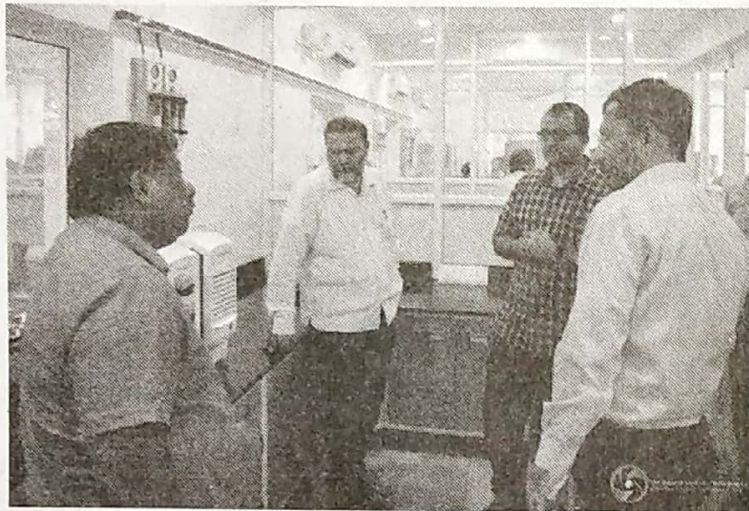
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Panaji: Goa University vice-chancellor prof Varun Sahni emphasized on the role of interdisciplinary research in creating innovations and welcomed joint research by Goa University and BITS faculty members and researchers.

He was speaking after inaugurating a state-of-the-art 3500 sq ft BITS BIRAC BioNest Innovation Lab, set up by BITS Pilani, K K Birla Goa Campus with financial



Goa University vice-chancellor prof Varun Sahni inaugurates the BITS BIRAC BioNest Innovation Lab.



Prof Srikanth Mutnuri, head, Biological Sciences department explains about the equipments to Goa University vice-chancellor prof Varun Sahni, Dr Shekhar Salkar, head of Department of Oncology, Manipal Hospitals and prof Raghurama G, director of BITS Pilani Goa.

support of Rs 3 crore from Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), a not-for-profit public sector enterprise, set up by Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Government of India.

This innovation lab would provide incubation support to the entrepreneurs in the verticals of

healthcare and environment by providing them equipment, space and supporting facilities to test their ideas, prototype in the lab and take it to the market.

In his introductory address, the Director of BITS Pilani Goa Campus, prof Raghurama G stated that this facility would lead to innovations in terms of af-

fordable healthcare and sustainable solutions to solve the pressing environmental problems of the country.

Prof Mridula Goel, in-charge of the incubator, invited scientists and start-ups from across the state to use the facility to take their ideas to proof of concept.

She informed that the incubatees would be provided technical guidance by the Technical Directors of the BioNEST, prof Sunil Bhand, professor of Chemistry and Dean of Sponsored Research and Consulting Division and prof Srikanth Mutnuri, head of Biological Sciences department.

Students and faculty from educational institutions were invited to participate in the regular trainings conducted on equipments like Spray Dryer, TOC, RT PCR, PCR, Gel-doc system, etc that are installed in the lab.

Dr Manish Diwan, Head of Strategic Partnership & Entrepreneurship Development, BIRAC, explained

how the journey from ideation to commercialization involves solid teamwork and harnessing mutual advantages from within India and abroad.

Inauguration was followed by an illuminating panel discussion on "Opportunities in Healthcare" with Dr N Sriram, Director of Molbio Diagnostics, Dr Shekhar Salkar, Head of Department of Oncology, Manipal Hospitals, Dr Praveen Khullar, Head of Global Development Center, Sanofi-Synthelabo India and Vibhav Joshi, the co-founder of Sattva Medtech along with Dr Diwan.

During the panel discussion, it was noted that innovators need to have passion and in order to solve problems related to healthcare they need to understand the real challenges by visiting hospitals and PHCs. This direct observational experience can create an understanding of key problems faced by the users.

The product/ solution developed by the innovator should be affordable to the user and utmost care should be taken to make sure that the product is beneficial and does not harm the user through its side effects. The panelists stressed on various critical issues that are relevant for the changing healthcare sector in India.

Experts said that the entrepreneurs should design products to suit Indian requirement into consideration while innovating and not just produce cheaper version of existing products.