

BITS Goa to set up AI research lab

Alumni Make \$1 Million Contribution

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Panaji: BITS Pilani, K K Birla Goa Campus at Zuarinagar is setting up a centre to promote research in 'artificial intelligence' (AI), director of the Goa campus G Raghurama said on Sunday. The centre will be called 'Anuradha and Prashanth Palakurthi Centre for Artificial Intelligence Research' (APPCAIR), named after the donors who have committed to contribute a minimum of one million USD for the centre, Raghurama said at the institute's 2019 convocation ceremony.

The APPCAIR lab will start its operations from Goa campus, but affiliates to the centre can be on any of the



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BITS campuses — at Pilani, Goa, Hyderabad or Dubai. APPCAIR will be headed by Ashwin Srinivasan, who is a senior professor in the department of computer science at BITS Goa.

"We are now at a point where AI techniques, especially data-driven ones are expected to play an important role in science, engineering, business and even humanities. We want to be part of sha-

'Youth must become agents of change'

K VijayRaghavan, principal scientific adviser to the government of India, Padma Shri awardee, and former secretary for the department of biotechnology at the Centre, was the chief guest at the convocation of BITS Pilani Goa Campus. VijayRaghavan, in his address, stressed on the need to democratise knowledge and urged youngsters to become the agents of change. This year, out of 1,148 students, who qualified BE (Hons), MSc (Hons) ME and PhD, 678 received their degrees during Sunday's convocation. Of these, 14 students received their PhDs. Three students from the bachelors' degree programme, Madhu Adav, Kathan Kashiparekh and Devritt were awarded gold, silver and bronze medals, respectively. Another 139 graduated through the work integrated learning programme. TNN

ping this future, and contribute positively to the nation's strategy for applications of AI in areas like healthcare, agriculture, education, urban planning, transport and so on," Srinivasan said.

Srinivasan has worked for nearly 30 years in the field of AI in places like the Turing Institute (Scotland), University of Oxford, and IBM Research. He is one of the leading researchers in

the field combining machine learning and logic. While the contributor for the AI research centre Prashanth Palakurthi is the founder and CEO of US-based Reflexis Systems, his wife Anuradha is the founder of Juju Productions, and a professional singer and radio personality in the United States.

"We wanted to give back to our alma mater which gave us so much and it was where

we started our journey. We hope our contribution is followed by many more from a family of hugely successful alumni," said Anuradha and Prashanth.

BITS Pilani was conferred with the 'Institute of Eminence (IoE)' status by the ministry of human resource development in 2018. BITS Pilani said that in this phase of its growth, it is giving a strategic thrust to its research agenda that would contribute to innovations and entrepreneurship ventures.

"Prashanth and Anuradha's contribution at this juncture would give a momentum to research agenda of the institute by way of attracting research-driven faculty, post-doctoral fellows and research scholars in an area that is going to see significant opportunities over the next decade," the institute said.