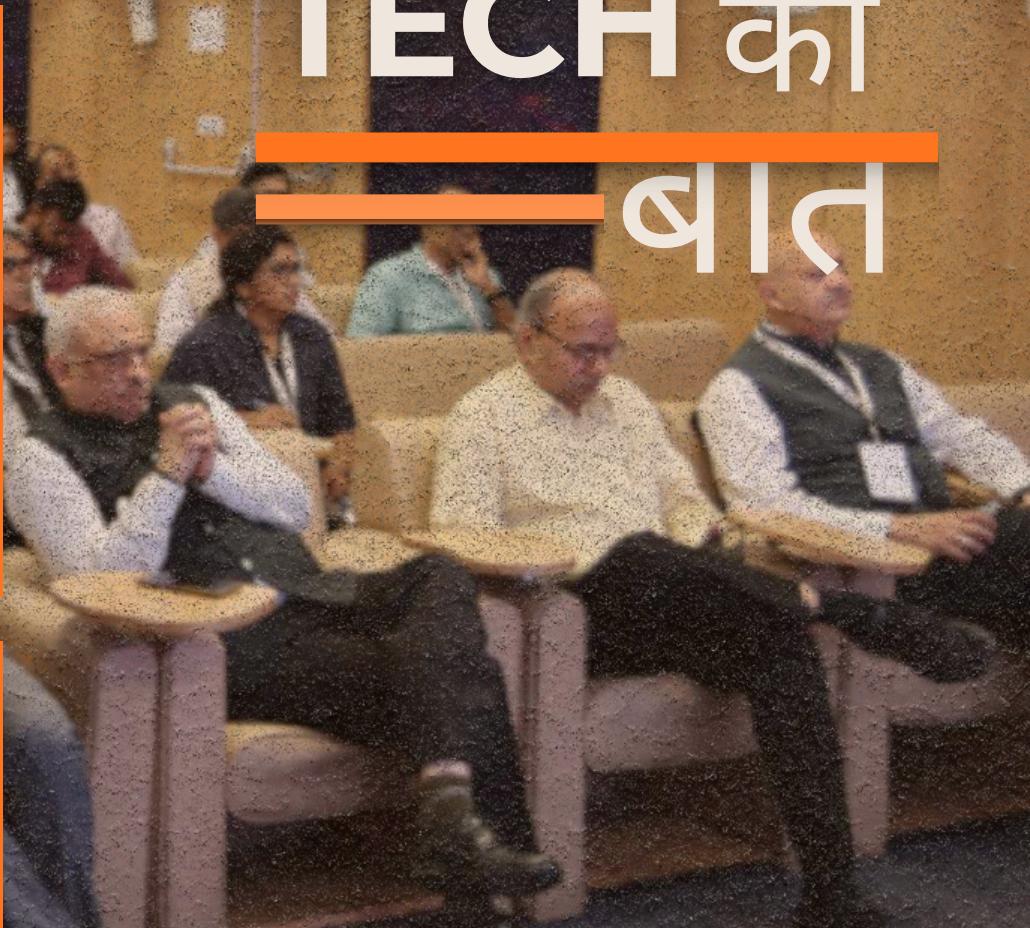




STARTUP
INCUBATION AND
INNOVATION
CENTRE
IIT KANPUR

September 2025

TECH की बात



Volume 4
Edition - 09

MENTOR Mantra



REMEMBERING SHRI SAURABH CHANDRA

We fondly remember our mentor, Mr. Saurabh Chandra (1955–2025), IIT Kanpur alumnus and former IAS officer, who served the nation with distinction. Since 2021, he served as a startup mentor at SIIC, generously sharing his wisdom, inspiring them to embrace governance and ethics as cornerstones of lasting success. His warmth, guidance, and integrity will continue to light the path for future entrepreneurs.

Corporate Governance: The Hidden Engine of Startup Success

The meteoric rise—and sudden stumbles—of startups like Byju's, BharatPe, GoMechanics, Mojo Care, and Zilingo offers a cautionary tale. While celebrated for their growth and media visibility, these companies share a common vulnerability: weak corporate governance. From delayed financial reporting and misappropriation of funds to inflated sales and unsustainable business models, the fallout exposes a simple truth: no amount of hype can substitute for ethical oversight and disciplined governance.

Corporate governance, as defined by the Cadbury Report (1992), is the system by which companies are directed and controlled. It is far more than compliance; it encompasses integrity, transparency, accountability, fairness, and a commitment to stakeholder trust. Yet, in many startups, governance is overlooked. Founders often prioritize product-market fit, fundraising, and rapid growth, while undervaluing the structures and practices that safeguard long-term sustainability. Boards may exist in name only, failing to intervene or challenge decisions until problems escalate.

The responsibility starts at the top. Founders' intent sets the tone for the entire organization. Chasing valuations at any cost—driven by investor pressure or the allure of media recognition—can quickly lead to unethical shortcuts. A company that prioritizes growth over integrity is building on sand. Conversely, founders who embrace governance from day one—through ethical decision-making, clear accountability, and open communication—create a durable foundation for success.

Strong boards are critical. They act as the conscience of the company, ensuring checks and balances, preventing malpractice, and fostering a culture where difficult conversations can take place without fear of reprisal. As management thinker Peter Drucker famously said, "Culture eats strategy for breakfast." A culture grounded in fairness, trust, and transparency is far more resilient—and far harder for competitors to replicate—than any strategy or business model.

Key Takeaways for Startup Founders



Governance is a long-term enabler, not a short-term burden.



Founders set the tone: intent and integrity are non-negotiable.



Strong, independent boards safeguard against malpractices.



A culture of fairness and transparency is harder to copy than strategy.

In the end, corporate governance is not a bureaucratic checkbox—it is a strategic asset. Startups that invest in governance from inception are better equipped to attract capital, retain talent, and weather crises. They build reputational credibility that accelerates growth, without compromising ethics. For founders, the lesson is clear: sustainable success stems from doing the right things consistently, not chasing transient valuations or media adulation. Governance is the hidden engine that ensures your startup doesn't just rise—but endures.

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New Incubation

New startups with novel and innovative technologies have been incubated at SIIC, IIT Kanpur, during June. Read on to learn about the startups.

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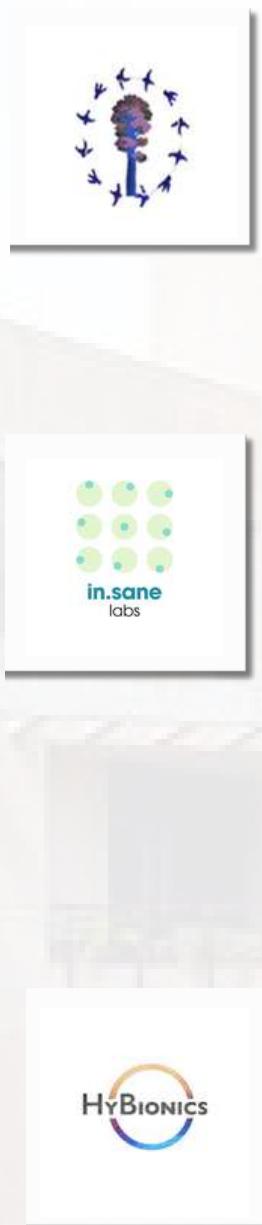
Explore upcoming grants, events, and workshops scheduled at SIIC.

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New Incubation



Aparoks

Founded by Sri Veera, Aparoks develops a portable, non-invasive device for early detection of heart failure. The technology enables timely diagnosis and treatment, helping reduce cardiac-related mortality. The company has been selected for a national cohort supporting impactful, for-profit ventures in healthcare.

Sane India

Founded by Viswanathan Sridhar and Sivakami Sridhar, Sane India Pvt. Ltd. is a Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)-focused startup incubated at SIIC, IIT Kanpur, developing mobile, eco-friendly public toilet solutions to improve urban sanitation access and reduce open defecation. It has been recognised for its high-impact social innovation under the Swachhata Startup Challenge—a prestigious program by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

Hybionics

Co-founded by Amaresh Tripathy and Anirudh B, Hybionics Private Limited is an assistive healthcare startup developing open-source prosthetic technologies to enhance mobility and accessibility for amputees. By making assistive devices more affordable, adaptable, and user-friendly, the company aims to bridge care gaps and empower individuals with disabilities.

Timeline



4th September 2025



On September 4, 2025, during FUEL 2025, SIIC, IIT Kanpur, signed an MoU with SamVed VC to strengthen support for technology startups. The agreement was formalised by Prof. Deepu Philip, Professor In-Charge, SIIC, and Mr. Vivek Khare, General Partner, SamVed Ventures. This collaboration will provide funding, mentorship, and operational support, helping early- and growth-stage startups accelerate their innovation journey.

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4th September 2025



On September 4, 2025, SIIC, IIT Kanpur, signed an MoU with the Council for Start-up India (CSI) to strengthen collaboration in nurturing India's startup ecosystem. The agreement was signed by Prof. Deepu Philip on behalf of FIRST and Mr. Pankaj Gupta, Legal Advisor, CSI, in the presence of Prof. Manindra Agrawal, Director, IIT Kanpur, and other dignitaries. Through this partnership, IIT Kanpur's research and innovation strengths will be integrated with CSI's networks and resources, fostering stronger industry linkages, enhanced support for entrepreneurs, and expanded opportunities for startup growth.

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Program

HIGHLIGHTS

On August 26, 2025, SIIC IIT Kanpur, in collaboration with the Social Innovation Lab by Citi, hosted a webinar on "Investment Readiness for Startups." Mr. Abhishek Kakkar from the Indian Angel Network shared insights on funding preparation, investor expectations, and India's 2025 funding rebound, emphasizing that visionary founding teams with integrity, intelligence, and energy remain the key drivers of investment success.

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WEBINAR HIGHLIGHTS



On August 29, 2025, the 5G/6G Centre of Excellence, powered by StartIn UP, hosted an industry session at SIIC IIT Kanpur. Mr. Sandeep Sharma, Head of Emerging Technologies-Network Services at Tech Mahindra, shared insights on "From 5G to 6G: Intelligent Connectivity as the Network Innovation & Startup Playground."

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On September 3, 2025, SIIC IIT Kanpur hosted Mr. M. S. Srikanth, Senior Manager-CSR at Indian Oil Corporation Limited. During his visit, IOCL leadership held one-on-one discussions with incubated startups across MedTech, Defence & Aerospace, Agritech, and more. The session highlighted pioneering innovations and explored opportunities for collaboration and CSR-led impact, underscoring the role of industry-academia partnerships in driving India's innovation journey.

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On September 4, 2025, SIIC IIT Kanpur hosted the inaugural FUEL 2025 (Funding, Upscaling, Enabling Leaders) summit at its Noida Innovation Hub, connecting 20 startups from sectors including agritech, healthcare, clean energy, deep tech, and medtech with investors, corporates, and government bodies. Prof. Manindra Agrawal, Director, IIT Kanpur, emphasized the summit's mission to bridge innovation with capital, while MoUs with SamVed VC and the Council for Start-up India strengthened mentorship and support for entrepreneurs, highlighting IIT Kanpur's growing role as a national hub for deep-tech innovation.

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Program

HIGHLIGHTS



On 8th September 2025, the 5G/6G Centre of Excellence (CoE), supported by StartIn UP, Government of Uttar Pradesh, conducted an outreach session at Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University (CSJMU), Kanpur, introducing students to opportunities in 5G/6G technologies and inspiring entrepreneurial exploration in this emerging field. The session saw enthusiastic participation from students and faculty, reflecting a shared commitment to fostering a future driven by innovation.

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On 9th September 2025, Startup Incubation and Innovation Centre (SIIC), IIT Kanpur, hosted Mr. Himanshu Sekhar Panigrahi, Senior Manager, CSR, Hindustan Copper Limited (HCL). During the visit, HCL was introduced to the vibrant SIIC ecosystem, with several startups presenting their solutions and future vision, leading to engaging discussions. The HCL team showed keen interest in supporting initiatives in Healthcare, Agritech, and Cleantech, where SIIC innovators are driving real-world impact.

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On 11th September 2025, SIIC, IIT Kanpur, hosted Major General Roopesh Mehta, SM, VSM, Additional Director General Capability Development (B), Integrated Headquarters of the Indian Army. The visit provided IIT Kanpur faculty, SIIC-incubated entrepreneurs, and startups an opportunity to showcase innovations in drone technology, electronic countermeasures, and aerospace. The delegation toured state-of-the-art defence facilities including the C3i Hub, Flight Lab, UAV Lab, and SSOL Lab, strengthening collaboration between the Indian Army and IIT Kanpur to advance indigenous defence and innovation ecosystems.

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On 12th September 2025, SIIC, IIT Kanpur, hosted Dr. Love Sarin, Project Director of Bharat Innovates 2026 from IIT Bombay, for an outreach visit engaging faculty, researchers, and students from Harcourt Butler Technical University and Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University. The visit, led by Dr. Sarvesh Sonkar, included tours of SIIC, MedTech facilities, and IME Labs, along with interactions with startups. Dr. Sarin shared the vision of Bharat Innovates 2026 and encouraged participants to pursue global opportunities, while Prof. Deepu Philip and Piyush Mishra offered valuable insights. The event reinforced SIIC's commitment to fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and collaborative mentorship in India.

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Primary Healthtech Secures TDB Support For Mobilab

SIIC-incubated medtech startup Primary Healthtech has received support from the Technology Development Board (TDB), DST, GoI, to scale its IoT-enabled, AI-powered point-of-care blood testing device, Mobilab. This portable, battery-operated analyzer delivers over 25 tests covering kidney, liver, cardiac health, vitamins, and cancer markers, making diagnostics more affordable and accessible. With a granted patent, six applications, 10,000+ successful trials, and a new CDSCO license, Mobilab is set to revolutionize point-of-care testing in India.

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TerrAqua, NTT Data Wins Indian CSR Award 2025

NTT Data and TerrAqua UAV Solutions, an SIIC-incubated startup at IIT Kanpur, have won the Indian CSR Award 2025 for "Best Flood Management Initiative of the Year." Their Flood Disaster Response System uses drone and satellite remote sensing with a web-GIS platform for real-time flood mapping, risk visualization, accurate forecasting, and rapid damage assessment, strengthening disaster response and long-term urban resilience.

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Offgrid Energy Labs Raises US\$15M Series A to Advance ZincGel® Battery Tech

SIIC-incubated Offgrid Energy Labs has raised US\$15 million in Series A funding led by Archean Chemical Industries Ltd, with Ankur Capital participating. The funds will support the setup of a 10 MWh demo manufacturing facility in the UK, advance R&D, commercialise ZincGel® batteries through certification and testing, and develop a blueprint for its upcoming giga-factory.

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UNEAKO Founders Featured on DD Morning Show

Brothers Ankit and Vaigyanik Atul Tripathi are taking UNEAKO global with support from ONDC. The Ayodhya-based zero-plastic brand started as a solution to Delhi's landfill crisis. Today, it reduces waste, saves trees, and empowers artisans. Guided by its mascot Polu the polar bear cub, UNEAKO is backed by SIIC IIT Kanpur and NITI Aayog, advancing its #MakePlanetHappy mission worldwide.

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Avris Wins IIM Indore Anveshan Award

Avris Environment Technologies won the Anveshan Startup Challenge 2025 organized by IIM Indore. The company was recognized for its product CHUGG, which converts food waste into biogas, offering a scalable clean-tech solution for sustainable waste management.

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Life and Limb & AgrowSure Wins Commonwealth Fellowship

lifeandlimb.ai and AgrowSure were two of three Indian startups selected from over 1,400 companies across 44 Commonwealth countries for the Commonwealth Startup Fellowship 2025. The six-month UK-backed programme concluded at London's Capstone Showcase, where lifeandlimb.ai presented its myoelectric prosthetics and AgrowSure highlighted climate-resilient agritech solutions for small farmers.

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NeuroDrishti Wins Dr. Gauri Shah Social Innovation Grant

At COEP Bhau Institute's Social Innovation Summit 2025, IIT Kanpur's NeuroDrishti, led by BFI Fellow Ashwani Yadav, was awarded the Dr. Gauri Shah Social Innovation Grant. Chosen from over 100 applicants, their Smart AI Glasses help visually impaired individuals by translating surroundings into accessible information. The recognition highlights NeuroDrishti as a rising force in assistive technology, advancing its mission to make vision more inclusive.

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Fruvetech Wins 13th Tata Social Enterprise Challenge

SIIC-incubated Fruvetech has won the 13th Tata Social Enterprise Challenge (TSEC) 2025, standing out among more than 15,000 applicants. The company impressed judges with its patented, low-cost shelf-life extension technology that enables refrigeration-free storage of fruits and vegetables. This innovation promises to cut post-harvest losses and reshape India's agricultural supply chain.

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RBG Secures 3x Funding Commitment from Rayzon Solar

IvyCap Ventures has provided essential support to Cute Brains, a startup incubated by SIIC that specializes in developing assistive technology for children with dyslexia and dysgraphia. With backing from IvyCap, Cute Brains recently hosted a workshop in Varanasi, where they trained 22 primary school teachers on early identification and intervention techniques using their innovative AACDD (Assistive Application for Children with Dyslexia and Dysgraphia) tool.

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INNOVATOR KE SATH



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Indespace

In this edition of Innovators se Baat, Mr. Rishabh Pandey from the Startup Incubation and Innovation Centre (SIIC), IIT Kanpur, speaks with Prof. Abhishek Verma, founder of Indespace Robotics and faculty at NIT Rourkela.

Indespace Robotics, incubated at SIIC, is tackling dystocia—prolonged and difficult labor—in cows and buffaloes, a major challenge in India's dairy sector. The startup has developed a portable, battery-powered device that softens and dilates the cervix through heat, vibration, and controlled inflation, offering a non-surgical, faster, and more effective alternative to drug therapies.

Rishabh Pandey (RP): How did your journey at IIT Kanpur lead to the creation of IndeSpace Robotics?

Prof. Abhishek Verma (AV): I joined IIT Kanpur in 2017, mainly to understand how to design meaningful, user-centered products. Working with Professor Ram Kumar, I began exploring how technology can be translated into usable solutions. During the Bio-Immersion Program with KGMU, we developed D-Scope, a gynecological endoscope that received a BIRAC BIG grant in 2018. That experience helped me grasp design functionality, usability, and clinical validation. Later, while working on assistive technologies, I encountered a veterinary challenge—dystocia in cattle—which became another focus area. Through these experiences, I realized how design thinking can bridge innovation and impact. IndeSpace Robotics was born from that understanding—to help others bring their ideas from concept to practical, manufacturable reality.

RP: What problem does IndeSpace Robotics aim to solve?

AV: While working with different innovators and startups, I noticed a big gap—there were plenty of ideas and technologies, but very few design studios that could help turn them into market-ready products. That's why I started IndeSpace Robotics in 2022. Our goal is to bridge the design-to-development gap in India's startup ecosystem. We provide industrial design, 3D modeling, human-centered prototyping, and compliance support to early-stage ventures, helping them progress from TRL 1 or 2 to TRL 5 or 6. Think of us as a design and prototyping partner—like what IDEO does globally—but tailored for Indian innovators who need structured design support before reaching manufacturing or regulatory stages.

RP: Tell us about your veterinary healthcare innovation and its impact.

AV: A scientist from IVRI, Dr. Brajesh Sahu, shared a serious issue in livestock care—dystocia, or incomplete cervical dilation during cattle labor. It can stretch over 24–36 hours, endangering both the calf and the mother, especially for marginal farmers whose livelihoods depend on these animals. We explored whether external heating and mechanical stimulation could help, and the results were promising. We designed a veterinary device that combines both principles to assist natural delivery. With SIIC IIT Kanpur's support, we patented the technology and later received another BIRAC BIG grant in 2023 to refine it further. It's a small innovation, but one that can make a real difference in rural veterinary healthcare.

RP: How did you balance your Ph.D. and startup journey?

AV: Honestly, it was challenging. A Ph.D. demands deep research focus, while a startup requires agility and quick decision-making. What helped was that my supervisor encouraged me to align my Ph.D. research with my product development goals—so the two complemented each other instead of competing for time. Initially, my family was unsure about the entrepreneurial path; like many Indian families, they viewed it as unstable. But over time, as the startup culture gained acceptance and they saw the social value of my work, their mindset changed completely. Today, they're my biggest supporters, and I truly believe that with the right mentorship and clarity, it's possible to manage both academia and entrepreneurship successfully.

“Design is not just about creating products—it's about turning ideas into solutions that truly impact lives.”

Events



AIIDE CoE

Call for Applications for Cohort 5



GENESIS Entrepreneur-in-Residence (EiR) Program

Call for Applications for Cohort 2



CSR



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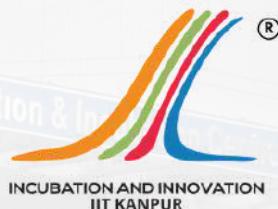
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