



STARTUP
INCUBATION AND
INNOVATION
CENTRE
IIT KANPUR



JANUARY 2026

TECH की बात

Volume 6
Edition-01



MENTOR MANTRA

Anil Jauhari,
Ex-CEO of NABCB (QCI) & expert in
standards, accreditation & climate action

Anil Jauhari, ex-CEO of NABCB (QCI) & expert in standards, accreditation & climate action, with over 40 years of experience in building India's quality infrastructure (UNFCCC CDM Panel since 2007, Global Carbon Council), reflected that investable ventures require strict quality standards, compliance & certification. He stressed that channeling strengths into sustainable impact & trust requires proactive guidance provided by the SIIC ecosystem.

Making Indian Certifications Globally Acceptable

An ISO 9001 certificate issued by a small certification body in cities like Bhopal or Lucknow – accredited by the National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB) – is globally acceptable. This is possible because of an international system built around the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) and global accreditation networks.

ISO develops consensus-based international standards, including management system standards such as ISO 9001 (quality), ISO 14001 (environment), and ISO 22000 (food safety), along with standards for information security, occupational health and safety, energy, and healthcare. It also publishes the ISO 17000 series covering conformity assessment – accreditation, inspection, testing, certification, and validation.

Global oversight is provided by the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC), which merged into the Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated from 1 January 2026. Through periodic evaluations, accreditation and certification bodies become part of a worldwide system of equivalence. As a result, when an NABCB-accredited body certifies a business anywhere in India, the certificate becomes globally recognised and verifiable through the international database.

This system works because countries adopt international standards exactly as they are. If India wants global acceptance of its certifications, inspection reports, and test results, it must align fully with these standards. Even when there are reservations about specific standards, adoption becomes necessary to remain part of the international equivalence framework.

Standards such as ISO 9001, ISO 14001, and ISO 22000 help Indian businesses demonstrate world-class quality. Their adoption also signals India's commitment to global benchmarks and makes standards more affordable through BIS.

In this context, modifying international standards after circulation for public comments could risk India's position within the global system. Alignment, therefore, is not just technical – it is strategic for global market acceptance.

LEADERSHIP: WELCOMING OUR NEW CEO



Dr. Ashutosh Agnihotri

CEO

Foundation for Innovation & Research in Science & Technology (FIRST), IIT Kanpur

The Startup Incubation and Innovation Centre (SIIC), IIT Kanpur, is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Ashutosh Agnihotri as Chief Executive Officer, effective January 1, 2026.

Dr. Ashutosh Agnihotri brings a distinguished blend of global research experience, strategic leadership, and operational excellence to this role. Most recently, he served as Chief Operating Officer at the Mission Coordination Cell of the National Quantum Mission at IIT Kanpur, where he played a key role in driving program execution and aligning diverse stakeholders across India's quantum technology ecosystem. His leadership contributed to strengthening institutional coordination and delivering high-impact national initiatives in frontier technologies.

Earlier in his career, Dr. Agnihotri spent six years as a Research Geophysicist at Shell in Amsterdam, working at the intersection of advanced technology and industrial application. He holds a PhD in Applied Physics from Eindhoven University of Technology, reflecting a strong academic foundation complemented by international industry exposure.

His appointment marks an important step in advancing SIIC's commitment to nurturing high-impact startups, accelerating the commercialization of cutting-edge research, and strengthening industry-academia linkages. Under his leadership, SIIC is poised to contribute more strategically toward the national vision of Viksit Bharat by building a resilient, technology-driven entrepreneurial ecosystem that aligns with India's long-term developmental aspirations.

SIIC, IIT Kanpur, extends a warm welcome to Dr. Ashutosh Agnihotri and looks forward to sustained growth, expanded impact, and institutional excellence under his leadership.

LEADERSHIP: WELCOMING OUR NEW CIO



Mr. Anurag Singh

Chief Investment Officer

Foundation for Innovation & Research in Science & Technology (FIRST), IIT Kanpur

Startup Incubation and Innovation Centre (SIIC), IIT Kanpur is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Anurag Singh as Chief Investment Officer at FIRST, effective January 1, 2026.

As part of a deliberate and forward-looking decision to strengthen FIRST's long-term capital strategy, Mr. Anurag Singh has transitioned from his role as CEO to assume the position of Chief Investment Officer and Managing Partner of Dhanvritti Venture. This transition was initiated by Mr. Singh to enable a sharper focus on building a structured venture capital platform that will benefit FIRST, its startups, and the broader IIT Kanpur innovation ecosystem.

An IIT Kanpur alumnus (B.Tech, 1986) and MBA graduate from the State University of New York, Mr. Singh brings over 35 years of entrepreneurial and investment leadership across the United States and India. He founded and led Education Management Solutions (EMS) in Pennsylvania for three decades, scaling it into a globally recognized simulation-technology company and building strong institutional partnerships.

During his tenure as CEO, Mr. Singh laid the strategic foundation for institutional capital formation at FIRST, including initiating the design and development of the IIT Kanpur – backed Alternative Investment Fund (AIF). Having established the operational and strategic direction of FIRST, he has now chosen to dedicate his time and energy toward deepening the investment architecture – ensuring sustained access to risk capital for deep-tech and research-driven ventures emerging from the ecosystem.

As Chief Investment Officer and Managing Partner of Dhanvritti Venture, Mr. Singh will lead fund formation, LP engagement, corporate partnerships, and investment strategy – creating a disciplined, thesis-driven deep-tech investment platform aligned with FIRST's translational research and commercialization goals.

This leadership evolution reflects continuity of vision and an intentional shift toward institutionalizing venture capital within the IIT Kanpur ecosystem. It strengthens FIRST's commitment to accelerating research commercialization and advancing India's innovation-led growth in alignment with the vision of Viksit Bharat."

CONTENTS



STARTUP
INCUBATION AND
INNOVATION
CENTRE
IIT KANPUR



NEW INCUBATION

New startups with novel and innovative technologies have been incubated at SIIC, IIT Kanpur.

Refer to the section for more details.

Page No:

01



MONTHLY TIMELINE

Take a deeper look into the exhilarating developments within the thriving SIIC-IIT Kanpur ecosystem throughout the month.

Refer to the section for more details.

Page No:

02



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Learn about some outstanding accomplishments in various programmes by verticals that are currently up and running at SIIC, IIT Kanpur

Refer to the section for more details.

Page No:

03-04



SUCCESS STORIES

Know more about the inspiring startups that have elevated our incubation ecosystem with their remarkable accomplishments on a national scale.

Refer to the section for more details.

Page No:

05-06



INNOVATORS SE BAAT

Discover the unique and advanced tech based startups that are currently being incubated at SIIC, IIT Kanpur.

Refer to the section for more details.

Page No:

07



UPCOMING EVENTS/ WORKSHOPS/GRANTS

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

Refer to the section for more details.

Page No:

08

NEW INCUBATION



APPIN GREEN

Appin Green is an emerging agritech startup co-founded by Shilpa Deshpande Kaistha, Associate Professor at CSJM University, focused on transforming farming through AI-driven solutions. Its flagship concept, SoilSense, empowers farmers with real-time soil health insights for better land management and sustainable yields.



STRANGIFY TECHNOLOGIES

Strangify Technologies is a deep-tech startup co-founded by Himanshu Rajpurohit and Jyoti Rajpurohit, advancing AI-driven mental health solutions. Its flagship product, MindSync, combines a compact neuro-device, personalized AI algorithms, and a SaaS dashboard leveraging non-invasive Neuroacoustic Vagal Stimulation (NVS) to deliver scientifically validated mental wellbeing support with measurable outcomes.



AVGARDE SYSTEMS

Avgarde Systems is a deep-tech startup co-founded by Nilutpal Choudury and Manash Bhuyan, specializing in AI-enabled radar sensing and radio frequency technology. Its flagship solutions focus on low-altitude airspace management and counter-drone technologies, delivering advanced situational awareness, aerial object detection, and secure operations in drone-heavy environments.



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"SIIC IIT KANPUR SIGNS LANDMARK PM-RKVY RAFTAAR MOU AS NATIONAL KNOWLEDGE PARTNER."

12 January, 2026



On January 12, 2026, the Foundation for Innovation and Research in Science and Technology (FIRST), IIT Kanpur, through its incubation arm, the Startup Incubation and Innovation Centre (SIIC), signed a landmark agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare, Government of India, under the PM-RKVY RAFTAAR Scheme - marking one of the most significant milestones in our organization's journey. Formally designated as a Knowledge Partner, SIIC (F.I.R.S.T) will now drive agri-entrepreneurship and innovation at a truly national scale.

This is the Government of India's powerful recognition of SIIC (F.I.R.S.T)'s depth, credibility, and capability to transform the country's agricultural ecosystem. It is a convergence of national policy ambition and world-class incubation expertise - and for us, a responsibility we carry with immense pride.

As Knowledge Partner, SIIC (F.I.R.S.T) will deliver across four pillars: structured incubation for agri-startups, expert mentorship through our distinguished networks, targeted capacity building for rural innovators, and deep ecosystem linkages connecting startups with investors, corporates, and institutions.

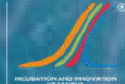
The collaboration is designed to accelerate technology-driven indigenous solutions, foster rural entrepreneurship, and enable scalable, sustainable socio-economic impact across Indian agriculture - reaching farming communities in every corner of the nation.

In the coming months, SIIC (F.I.R.S.T) will launch dedicated agri-incubation cohorts, skill-development programs, and startup support initiatives under this partnership. This is more than a collaboration - it is our commitment to a sector that contributes 18% to India's GDP, employs over 45% of the workforce, and sustains the livelihoods of more than 600 million people.

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PROGRAM

HIGHLIGHTS



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On 7 January, 2026, SIIC, IIT Kanpur, represented the IIT Kanpur startup ecosystem at Karobar ki Udaan, an MSME-focused interactive workshop held at The Landmark Hotel, Kanpur. Dr. Ashutosh Agnihotri, CEO, SIIC (FIRST) IIT Kanpur; Shri Piyush Mishra, COO & CFO, SIIC IIT Kanpur; and Prof. Raja Angamuthu, Associate Dean R&D, IIT Kanpur, shared insights on enterprise scaling, investor readiness, and access to capital markets. The session guided MSME owners through the transition from private enterprises to publicly listed companies via the NSE Emerge platform.



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On 15 January, 2026, SIIC, IIT Kanpur hosted the Orientation Day for AIIDE-CoE Cohort 5. Mr. Vasav Krishna outlined the support framework and engagement roadmap, while Mr. Pushkar Verma, Cloud Wizard Consulting, presented an AWS services overview. Mr. Piyush Mishra, COO & CFO, SIIC IIT Kanpur, and Dr. Sarvesh Sonkar highlighted SIIC's startup ecosystem strengths. Founders from xTerra Robotics and Cyethack Solutions shared entrepreneurial insights from earlier cohorts. The session concluded with an interactive networking session fostering collaboration among Cohort 5 founders.



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PROGRAM

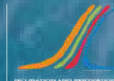
HIGHLIGHTS

SIIC, IIT Kanpur, highlighted strategies to prepare Indian startups for global capital through a recent session of the Bharat Innovates 2026 Webinar Series. Moderated by Dr. Poorna Roy, AVP, SIIC, the session featured Dr. Ritesh Jain, Advisor to the World Bank and former COO at HSBC, Visa, and Maersk, who shared insights on International Funding & Investor Readiness. The discussion focused on enabling deep-tech startups from higher education institutions to access global platforms, identify high-potential ventures across 13 themes, and showcase Indian innovations internationally, including in France in 2026, aligning with the Ministry of Education's Bharat Innovates 2026 initiative.

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On 18 December, 2025, SIIC, IIT Kanpur, through the AIIDE CoE, in collaboration with Start in UP (Official) and FICCI, hosted a webinar titled “Startup Finance Mastery: A Founder’s Finance Toolkit for Sustainable Growth.” The session featured CA Prachi Jain, who shared practical insights on fundraising, venture finance, structuring, and compliance, and was moderated by Ms. Vatsala Khare. The webinar equipped founders and early-stage teams with actionable financial frameworks to support informed decision-making and sustainable growth.

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SUCCESS STORIES



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RenewCred Secures ₹4.25 Crore Seed Funding

SIIC, IIT Kanpur, incubated startup RenewCred (Net Zero Pvt. Ltd.) has raised ₹4.25 crore in seed funding led by Campus Angels Network, with participation from leading investors. The startup is building India's first digital, science-led carbon credit registry to strengthen transparency in voluntary carbon markets.

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Ms. Saumya Kumari, Founder – GlimpseTech Pvt. Ltd., selected for GENESIS EiR Programme.

Ms. Saumya Kumari, founder of SIIC, IIT Kanpur, incubated startup GlimpseTech Private Limited, has been selected for the GENESIS Entrepreneur-in-Residence (EiR) Programme. This reflects a strong innovation potential to develop impactful, scalable solutions.

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Biosprint and Brela Innovations Secure Patent Grants

SIIC, IIT Kanpur-incubated startups Biosprint and Brela Innovations Private Limited, have been granted patents by the Patent Office, Government of India (GoI). The granted patents highlight a notable advancement in their commitment to innovation, reinforcing the role of IP-led development in translating research-driven ideas into scalable and impactful solutions.

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Dream Aerospace Secures ₹1 Crore IN-SPACE Grant for Autonomous Space Docking

Dream Aerospace has received ₹1 crore from IN-SPACE under the Announcements of Opportunity (AO) scheme for Full Mission Virtualization for its project on Autonomous Docking Operations for On-Orbit Maintenance and Refueling. The grant recognizes its work in advancing autonomous space infrastructure, supporting India's self-reliant space ambitions.

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STORIES



Aural Essence Engages with Union Finance Minister

SIIC, IIT Kanpur, incubated startup Aural Essence Private Limited, had the opportunity to interact with Smt. Nirjala Sitharaman, Hon'ble Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, Government of India. The interaction offered valuable guidance on building purpose-driven, indigenous innovations with global relevance. Aural Essence also highlighted its flagship product, Aural Rosemary Hydrosol, a nature-driven, eco-conscious alternative to synthetic products, reinforcing the startup's focus on sustainable value chains and long-term impact.

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Lenek and Ksham Innovations Secure ₹20 Lakh DISHA 2.0 Grant

SIIC, IIT Kanpur, incubated startups Lenek and Ksham Innovations have received ₹20 lakh each under the DISHA 2.0 Programme by IITI DRISHTI CPS Foundation, IIT Indore, recognising their innovation-driven impact and growth potential.

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Checko Advances Anti-Counterfeiting Efforts in Health and Agriculture

SIIC, IIT Kanpur, incubated startup Checko has drawn attention to the rising threat of counterfeit cancer drugs in India, as highlighted by recent rackets and seizures in 2025. The company's PUF-based anti-counterfeiting technology has also gained significant traction in the agriculture sector, with adoption by Chambal Fertilisers and Chemicals Limited, strengthening supply chain integrity and boosting farmer trust.

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INNOVATOR KE SATH



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CI METRICS

In this edition of Innovators se Baat, we speak with Abhishek Patil, co-founder and CTO of CI Metrics - a deep-tech startup incubated at SIIC, IIT Kanpur, building cutting-edge climate intelligence through satellite data and artificial intelligence. In this conversation, Mr. Abhishek shares how his decade-long journey at ISRO shaped his understanding of satellite data, how he identified a critical gap in connecting upstream data with real-world business challenges, and how this vision led to CI Metrics - a venture delivering predictive climate insights for sectors like insurance, agriculture, logistics, and mobility. He also reflects on the role of SIIC's incubation ecosystem in accelerating their growth and enabling them to build technology at the forefront of space-tech and climate-tech innovation.

Himanshi Kushwaha (HK): Can you tell us about your journey and how CI Metrics started?

Abhishek Patil (AP): I did my B.Tech in avionics and robotics from the Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology—ISRO's college in Trivandrum. After that, I worked for almost a decade at ISRO's Space Applications Centre in Ahmedabad, mainly in the data processing division. I worked on major payloads like HYASIS, Cartosat, and Chandrayaan, and I realized the immense potential of satellite data. But I also saw a big gap - very few companies were connecting upstream satellite data with downstream industry needs. That's when my co-founder, Gagan Agarwal, and I took a leap of faith and started CI Metrics. We combine satellite and climate data using our in-house machine learning and AI models, and today we serve the insurance, banking, agriculture, and roadside assistance sectors through a unified platform.

HK: Can you share a real-world example that shows the impact of your technology?

AP: A good example is our work with Allianz Partners. Everyone knows roadside assistance - when your car breaks down, someone comes to help. Allianz had a hypothesis that the frequency of these breakdowns depends heavily on weather conditions like rainfall, temperature, and even city-specific patterns. They gave us anonymized data, and we combined it with weather data at a granular grid level. We built a model that predicted breakdown frequency with about 85% accuracy for the next five days. We delivered this through a dashboard that their team used, and it was very well received. The larger point is climate change affects every business, but there's no metric that quantifies this risk clearly. That's the core problem we are solving.

HK: How do you build motivation, culture, and resilience in a deep-tech team?

Our only real asset is the human brain, so we focus on nurturing it. We give every new team member about six months just to settle—understand the niche ecosystem, attend client meetings, ask questions, and absorb the domain. We don't expect operational output from day one. After that, we gradually give them smaller problem statements to solve. This approach consistently helps people perform far better than if they were pushed immediately. Our mantra is simple: hire good people, retain good people, and motivate good people. If you do that, your startup will move forward.

HK: What advice do you have for young founders building in space-tech, climate-tech or deep-tech?

AP: Don't build something just because you want to. Build something that solves another person's real problem. Talk to people who are strangers - not friends - and see if they genuinely find your idea valuable. Do market surveys and technical surveys, and make sure you have at least a year of runway. And yes, leaving ISRO was difficult, but it taught me to wear many hats—HR, pitching, sourcing, negotiating—all at once. It's challenging but very fulfilling. If you take a methodical approach and understand the real problem statement, you'll succeed.

"Climate change affects every business - but there's no metric that quantifies this risk clearly. That's the core problem we are solving"



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UPCOMING

GRANTS/EVENTS/WORKSHOPS



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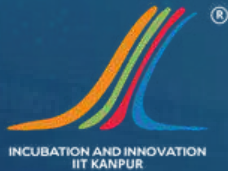
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