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# IIT-Bhub eyes to become nerve centre for digital development

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 2:** In a bid to improve digital literacy in Odisha, the Indian Institute of Technology, Bhubaneswar, has announced that 40 to 50 per cent of their research programmes will now be focusing on digital infrastructure development.

Observing the fourth anniversary of the Digital India Initiative which was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2015, the IIT said that it would expand its projects that focus on Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality and Artificial Intelligence.

"IIT-B has a vision to become the nerve centre for digital development not only in the Eastern region but also in the entire country. For this, the IIT has been working in digital research, guidance and sponsoring projects in digital growth. This will not only improve the infrastructure in this field but will also help in developing entrepreneurs that will generate employment and spur growth," said IIT-Bhubaneswar Director, RV Raja Kumar.

He said that about 10 of their research projects are presently focusing on different digital ideas. While Rs 7.5 crore has been granted for these projects, about Rs 2.5 crore more will be spent on laboratory and infrastructure development.

"While the projects will be focused on digital growth in different sectors, much will see advancement in Augmented Reality - needed for better visualisation for stakeholder; Virtual Reality - essential for training in development of Digital India and Artificial

## R&D BOOST



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Intelligence - to gather information and data. The IIT-Bhubaneswar will be taking assistance of Fab Lab for development of projects in these fields," Kumar added.

The first-of-its-kind Fab Lab (Fabrication Laboratory) is a workshop with a wide spectrum of computer controlled equipment, tools, hardware and software applications. Set up by Software Technology Park of India (STPI) with support from the state government, the Fab Lab is a disruptive technology based lab that is equipped with 3D printers and prototyping gadgets.

"This is the first and only lab in the entire Eastern region of India. Such labs help in rapid prototyping of industrial products and on-demand manufacturing from open source designs for both hobbyist

and serious use. The lab here would act as support facility for the maker community comprising startups, entrepreneurs, corporates, researchers, incubates and research groups," stated Nihar Mohanty, Fab Lab manager.

Responding to a query on climate change and role of digital development, Kumar said that advancement in this field can help in predicting natural calamities in advance such as Cyclone Fani and save human lives.

"While Augmented Reality can help develop intricate skills in driving and aviation through simulation, Virtual Reality can raise awareness about the impact of climate change by making people visualise the consequences of not preserving nature," Kumar added.