

NITK launches SEARCH facility for search and rescue operations

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The National Institute of Technology Karnataka (NITK) Surathkal formally launched its new System for Emergency Assistance, Response, and Communication Hub (SEARCH) facility comprising cutting-edge communication devices, and autonomous aerial and marine vehicles, on Monday.

“The SEARCH, which is within portable container cabins, can be deployed not just for disaster response but also for monitor-



NITK's Centre for System Design led the project. RAGHAVA M.

ing water and air quality, observing patterns of coastal erosion and accretion, and assessing the health of mangroves,” said Pruthviraj U., Project Head of

SEARCH and Professor in-charge of Transdisciplinary R&D in NITK.

NITK's Centre for System Design led the project.

SEARCH was borne out of a need of a temporary transdisciplinary laboratory, close to the beach. The new facility not just provides experiential learning for students, but is also useful to the society at large in times of disaster management and other operations on rivers and sea.

The nerve centre of SEARCH is its communication hub that has cutting edge UHF/VHF/HF radio

stations and also satellite communication facility. It has systems to monitor movement of ships and flights in a radius of 400 km (250 miles). The communication hub is connected to autonomously-designed drones (4), two kayaks, a two-seater and a four-seater boat, and a aerial vehicle.

“The new facility is designed in a way that it can moved to any part of the country for operations,” said Manish E.S., junior research fellow from the Centre for System Design.

Mr. Pruthviraj said they

have completed Phase 1 of SEARCH. The abilities of SEARCH will be further improved in Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the project.

Launching the new facility, NITK Director B. Ravi said the institute is on a mission to create a learning environment for everyone. The institute is committed towards creating more such hands-on facilities for students, which will also have lasting impact on the society. “I want SEARCH to document its success stories,” Mr. Ravi said. He thanked alumni for supporting SEARCH.