

Integration between Public, Private sectors crucial to future growth: Dr Jitendra

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NEW DELHI: Integration between Public and Private sectors is crucial to future growth, emphasized Dr. Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Earth Sciences, MoS PMO, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, in a pivotal session during the National Learning Week, jointly organized for all levels of employees of all the Science Ministries and Departments.



Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh addressing the "Karmayogi" National Learning Week jointly organized for all levels of employees of all the Science Ministries and Departments at Technology Bhavan, New Delhi on Wednesday.

The Union Minister highlighted how the convergence of public sector requirements, private sector innovations, and government efforts is shaping the next phase of technological advancement in the country. Referring to BharatGen, India's indigenously developed large language model (LLM), and the growing role of AI in governance, Dr. Jitendra Singh stressed that such collaborative efforts are vital to drive innovation, improve public service delivery, and ensure India remains competitive in the global AI landscape. The Minister noted that harnessing private sector expertise, combined with government initiatives like BharatGen and AI applications, will pave the way for scalable, inclusive, and efficient solutions for the nation's diverse needs.

Dr. Jitendra Singh further highlighted that the government's role in this integration is to create an enabling environment that fosters innovation, supports startups, and ensures that technological advancements align with national priorities. "When public demands meet private sector creativity,

and government policies facilitate growth, we can achieve scalable and sustainable solutions that benefit the entire country," the Minister stated. He praised the ongoing collaboration between the public sector and private enterprises in areas like AI and LLMs, which are vital for India's competitive edge in the global tech landscape. The session also saw participation from Secretary, Ministry of Science and Technology, Abhay Karandikar; Secretary Biotechnology Dr. Rajesh Gokhale and Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Dr. M. Ravindran, who echoed Dr. Jitendra Singh's views on the need for a united approach to ensure sustainable growth and innovation across sectors.

BharatGen, an indigenously developed large language model (LLM) tailored for Indian languages, was the focal point of a session organized for employees of the Science Ministries as part of the National Learning Week. The session delved into the practical applications of BharatGen across various sectors, emphasizing its potential to revolutionize public service delivery and enhance citizen engagement. By using India-centric data, BharatGen can generate high-quality text and speech outputs in multiple

Indian languages, making it a key tool for promoting digital inclusion in the country. Experts highlighted how BharatGen can be applied to sectors such as governance, healthcare, and education, helping bridge linguistic gaps and making digital services accessible to a larger segment of India's population. The model's ability to understand and respond in regional languages ensures that AI technology is not limited to English speakers, providing a more personalized experience for users. BharatGen's applications can range from AI-driven customer support for government services to real-time translations and speech-to-text functionalities.

One of the key takeaways from the session was BharatGen's role in promoting India's technological independence. Unlike global AI models, BharatGen prioritizes Indian languages and cultural contexts, addressing the unique challenges faced by the country. This AI model aligns with the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat, ensuring that India retains control over its digital resources while empowering startups, industries, and public institutions to build on the BharatGen framework for various innovations.

In a dedicated session on Artificial Intelligence (AI) during National Learning Week, employees from the Science Ministries were introduced to the transformative potential of AI in governance and public service delivery. The session highlighted how AI could be used to improve decision-making processes, streamline administrative tasks, and enhance citizen-centric services. By leveraging AI technologies, government departments can increase efficiency, reduce human error, and create more responsive systems to meet the evolving needs of the public.

The session emphasized the ethical and responsible use of AI, particularly in safeguarding data privacy and maintaining transparency in government functions. Experts outlined the importance of developing AI frameworks that ensure fairness and accountability, particularly when dealing with sensitive data in sectors such as healthcare and governance. Participants were encouraged to explore AI applications in areas like predictive analysis for policy-making and automating routine tasks to focus on more strategic issues.

A key highlight of the session was the importance of building AI models suited to India's unique requirements. By focusing on regional languages and culturally relevant contexts, AI can better serve India's diverse population. The participants were urged to continuously upgrade their AI skills, ensuring that India remains competitive globally while fostering innovation and inclusivity in public services.

Concluding the session, Dr. Jitendra Singh reiterated the government's commitment to strengthening partnerships between the public and private sectors, emphasizing that such collaborations are not just beneficial but necessary for India's long-term growth. He expressed confidence that with sustained efforts and a shared vision, India will continue to lead in technological advancements that are both inclusive and forward-looking.



Jammu physiotherapist honoured in Pune

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JAMMU: A proud daughter of the soil, Komal Sharma, a renowned Physiotherapist from Jammu and having her own clinic in Pune (Maharashtra) was honoured by National Health and Wellness conference at a function held at Pune recently.



Officer, while receiving the award stated, "This is incredible honour testament to my dedication, passion and love for the patients to live a pain-free healthy lives. She also expressed gratitude to the patients, her teams of colleagues and the entire healthcare community for constant support in her journey of healing and wellness. Komal Sharma is daughter of ML Sharma, Ex-JKAS Finance cadre

Drug epidemic in younger generation, all eyes on new government

MASROOR AHMAD:

SRINAGAR: With the new government assuming office in J&K, one of the biggest challenges faced to it is the growing menace of drugs, especially the increasing use of heroin among the youth.

Despite a zero-tolerance policy towards drugs, J&K is facing a severe health and social crisis, that threatens an entire generation of youth

In August this year, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs informed the Rajya Sabha that a total of 66,595 kg of drugs were seized in J&K over the past three years under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. Of this, 61,396 kg were opium-based drugs. It means 61.4 tonnes of opioids were seized in J&K in just three years.

The J&K Police recently said that 4536 persons had been arrested during a crackdown against illegal narcotic trade networks from the beginning of 2023 to July this year.

According to a recent report from the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, J&K ranks among the states with the highest prevalence of opioid drug abuse in India. Various estimates put the number of people abusing various drugs in J&K between a staggering 10 lakh and 14 lakh.

An insightful report by the Institute of Mental Health and Neuroscience, GMC Srinagar, calculated the prevalence of substance dependence in Kashmir as 2.87 percent of the population. Drug De-Addiction and Treatment Center (DDTC) at SMHS Hospital incharge said, heroin crisis is a catastrophe in making.

He said one of their studies found that about seven out of every 10 people abusing heroin intravenously was infected with Hepatitis C, and an increasing number was getting Hepatitis B and HIV infections.

"It is an expensive treatment and by the time a person is diagnosed and put on treatment, they have already infected many more," he said.

As per the figures of the IMHANS, 45 percent of people, studied as part of a research on pattern and prevalence of substance abuse in J&K (2021) were using injectable opioids.

Although the Addiction Treatment Facilities (ATF) have been started in almost all district hospitals of J&K, these facilities continue to remain open from 10 am to 4 pm, with kono provision for admitting a patient. In-patient facility is available only at two centres of GMC Srinagar in Kashmir. Addiction case does not report to the ATF directly. They often get into health issues and report to hospitals near them. A doctor needs to be vigilant and trained to identify a case of abuse and guide accordingly," a senior psychiatrist working in a district-level ATF said. He said patients often arrive "late" for addiction treatment.

"In addition, urine-based drug analysis kits need to be more accessible and available across district hospitals," he said.

Srinagar district administration admitted, that 95 percent of the theft cases the Police investigated were found to be linked with drugs. As per the Police, "Drugs have fueled many other crimes in the UT." An increase in petty crime, domestic violence, and mental health issues is linked to substance abuse. The rising number of overdose deaths has also been alarming, further exacerbating the situation.

A report, a few years ago, estimated that Rs 3.7 crore are spent on drugs in Srinagar and Anantnag districts alone. The economic implications of the drug crisis are far-reaching. With a large portion of the youth population ensnared by addiction, the region faces the grim possibility of a "lost generation," one that is unable to contribute to the economic and social development of J&K.

The unemployment rate remains high, and with addiction siphoning off much of the potential workforce, the new government will be hard-pressed to revive economic activity in the region. While previous administrations have acknowledged the growing drug problem, the response needs intensification, with a focus on a holistic approach that combines healthcare, rehabilitation, and community outreach.

The new government has promised a more comprehensive strategy to tackle the drug menace and a war against drugs was part of the election manifesto of National Conference. The government is expected to collaborate with central authorities and international organisations to curb cross-border smuggling and provide necessary resources for the treatment of those already affected.

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