

Amit describes innovation with 'Internet of Things' as next in-thing in 6th CII Summit on IoT

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI: Amit Sharma, Secretary Information Technology, Administration of UT of Ladakh was invited as the Guest of Honour in the Confederation of Indian Industry's (CII) 6th edition of the Summit on the Internet of Things (IoT) held on Thursday in New Delhi, with industry leaders and the presence of top Corporate leaders here. While addressing the august audience in the National Capital today in the Inaugural Session, Amit Sharma stressed upon unlocking the power of innovation through seamless integration. He pointed out that "As the Secretary of Information Technology in Ladakh and previously in Jammu & Kashmir, I envision a future wherein the IoT nexus transforms lives and landscapes. Let's pioneer new pathways to prosperity and progress and make the best blend of the IoT nexus to propel our region into



Secretary IT, Administration of UT of Ladakh, Amit Sharma with other dignitaries at CII Summit at New Delhi.

the digital age by connecting devices, data, and dreams to build a smarter, more sustainable future." Amit also described that Internet of Things in the common parlance like Alexa like Devices, Smart Watches and Smart Phones, AR-VR, Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning and Industrial even Agricultural based devices are the 'new norm' which are ever-evolving in new age and every new technology faces the threat of becoming obsolete

due to advent of IoT based new leads coming every now and then. Secretary IT, Union Territory of Ladakh Amit Sharma further invited IT and ITES related industries to set-up plants in Ladakh and focus on investment there, particularly in electronics manufacturing and emerging technologies like IoT, AI, and Cloud and Data Center, especially when the UT of Ladakh is envisaging into a new era towards setting-up of Electronics Manufacturing

Cluster under EMC 2.0 Scheme. Other dignitaries who were present on the dais in the inaugural session and addressed the audience along-

with Amit Sharma during the session include Prof Ashutosh Sharma, Former Secretary, Ministry of Science & Technology and President, Indian National Science Academy, Dr. Rishi Bhatnagar, President, Lava International, Dilip Sawhney, Managing Director, Rockwell Automation and Jasmeet Singh from the World Economic Forum, along with other top corporates.

This CII session had a packed gathering of subject specialists and who adored the special address by humanaries and policy makers in the domain.



IIM Jammu inks MoU with SKUAST-K

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: In a significant step towards fostering academic collaboration and advancing regional development initiatives, Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Jammu and Sheri-e-Kashmir University of Agriculture, Science and Technology Kashmir (SKUAST-K) joined hands through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Thursday. The historic agreement was formalized at a ceremony held at the Srinagar Campus of SKUAST-K.

The MoU was signed between Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director of IIM Jammu, and Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai, Vice Chancellor of SKUAST-K. The MoU signing witnessed the presence of key dignitaries including Prof. Jabir Ali, Dean Academics of IIM Jammu, Dr. Muqbil Burhan, Chairperson of Srinagar Campus, Cmdr Kesavan Baskaran, Chief Administrative Officer of IIM Jammu, along with other officials from SKUAST-Kashmir and IIM Jammu.

Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director of IIM Jammu, expressed enthusiasm about the collaborative opportunities presented by the MoU, stating, "This partnership signifies a pivotal moment for both



Prof. B.S. Sahay, Director of IIM Jammu and Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai, VC SKUAST-K at MoU signing ceremony.

institutions, as we embark on a journey of knowledge exchange and collaborative growth. By joining forces with SKUAST-K, we aim to leverage our respective strengths in research, education, and innovation to address pressing societal challenges and foster holistic development in the region. This MoU not only facilitates academic and research collaborations but also underscores our commitment to nurturing entrepreneurial talent and promoting sustainable development. Together, we envision creating a transformative impact that transcends boundaries and empowers communities.

Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai, Vice Chancellor of SKUAST-K, emphasized the transformative potential of the collaboration, stating, "This partnership opens new avenues for interdisciplinary research, skill development, and entrepreneurial initia-

tions. Together, we can address pressing challenges and contribute to the socio-economic progress of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. By leveraging our combined expertise and resources, we can drive innovation, promote sustainable development, and empower the youth with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in today's dynamic world. This collaboration embodies a broader vision of regional prosperity and underscores our shared commitment to fostering excellence in education, research, and entrepreneurship."

Prof. Jabir Ali, Dean Academics of IIM Jammu, highlighted the holistic approach envisaged through this collaboration, stating, "By synergizing our academic resources and expertise, we aim to create inclusive opportunities for students, faculty, and the wider community. This MoU lays the founda-

tion for a dynamic partnership focused on fostering innovation, knowledge exchange, and sustainable development."

The MoU between IIM Jammu and SKUAST-K marks a significant step towards establishing a comprehensive partnership focusing on Research and Development, Executive Education & Consultancy, Faculty Development Programmes, Skill Development Programmes, Advisory Services and Consulting, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Inclusive and Sustainable Development, and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC). Notably, the agreement facilitates the sharing of term credits in the MBA program as per NEP 2020, allowing students from SKUAST-K to enrol in term courses at IIM Jammu with credit transfer.

The MoU will also foster

collaborative initiatives such as joint course offerings, interdisciplinary research promotion, and educational resource exchange. Moreover, it promotes workshops, seminars, and short-term education programs to enhance research and teaching collaborations. The partnership also emphasizes providing research and consultancy services to governmental bodies, joint research endeavours, and active participation in cultural exchange programs, boot camps and sports activities. Additionally, the MoU prioritizes internship opportunities, credit exchange, and the promotion of entrepreneurship, innovation, and skill development through state-of-the-art incubation facilities. Together, IIM Jammu and SKUAST-K aim to cultivate an environment conducive to academic excellence, research innovation, and societal impact.

The MoU between IIM Jammu and SKUAST-K sets the stage for a collaborative journey aimed at advancing knowledge, promoting entrepreneurship, and driving growth in the Union Territory of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. Both institutions are poised to embark on joint initiatives that promise to create lasting impact and contribute to the socio-economic development of the region.

JPDCL to lodge FIR against power theft; acts tough against defaulters

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAMMU: In a major decision, the Jammu Power Distribution Corporation Limited (JPDCL) has decided to lodge FIR against erring consumers who are involved in power theft by means of hooking and bypassing of meters including Smart meters.

The decision has been taken by Vikas Kundal, Managing Director JPDCL.

Managing Director JPDCL instructed the ABEs to lodge FIR under Section 135 of Electricity Act, 2003 against those who are found to be indulging in Power theft.

According to the act electricity theft shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years or with fine or with both.

MD, JPDCL Vikas Kundal, in a statement cautioned strict action including imprisonment against those who try to hoodwink the department by indulging in bypassing of Electronic/Smart meters.

He said that such practices are causing massive loss to the public exchequer and honest consumers suffer due to illegal practices by the some miscreants.

He added that it is the highest priority of the UT Government to reduce the aggregate transmission and distribution losses and the same can only be achieved if such practices are curbed.

Managing Director JPDCL further explained that tamper-



ing of meter; use of tampered meter; loop connection or any other device or method which interferes with accurate or proper registration, calibration or metering of electric current or otherwise results in a manner whereby electricity is stolen amounts to power theft and general public shall refrain from such practices.

In a drive against 'illegal' power connections and delinquent payments, the JPDCL has disconnected more than 5256 defaulters, raking in an impressive revenue in last 3 days, officials said today. "In the first place, connections of 5256 consumers including influential consumers (Industries, Hotels and Influential persons) were disconnected to sensitize the masses to clear their liabilities on account of electricity bills and develop habits of paying electricity bills in time," it added.

The crackdown, part of JPDCL's ongoing efforts to curb energy theft and address financial irregularities, witnessed an intensified inspection

process, including day and night patrolling to check power pilferage. JPDCL spokespersons highlighted that the initiative aimed to tighten the noose on consumers engaged in widespread hooking, violation of agreed load, and bypassing of meters.

In an official statement, the JPDCL emphasized its commitment to provide relief to genuine consumers, ensuring that they are not burdened by the actions of erring individuals. The power distribution company further underscored the need to crack down on practices such as energy pilferage, which not only lead to outages but also result in damage to transformers, causing inconvenience to legitimate consumers.

Meanwhile, JPDCL in its official statement said that taking cognizance of huge arrears despite providing a reliable power supply amid harsh winters, various Sub Divisions of JPDCL launched a fresh massive disconnection drive vis-a-vis influential and chronic defaulter having huge arrears. During the drive Domestic, Industrial and Commercial consumers having huge arrears were targeted.

Managing Director JPDCL in a statement urged consumers to settle their pending bills promptly to avoid power disconnections, emphasizing that it remains committed to provide uninterrupted and reliable power supply to those who fulfill their financial obligations.

With arrival of spring season, almond trees blooming in Kashmir

MASROOR AHMAD

SRINAGAR: With the arrival of spring in Kashmir, almond trees are the first fruit trees to flower in the early months of spring. White and pink flowers with a unique fragrance attract the nature lovers and visitors from across the country.

The pink and white flowers on the almond trees are no less than a floral wonderland. And there are thousands of almond trees in Srinagar city's famous 'Badamwari'. Almond Garden, which are blooming and ready to welcome tourists as well as locals.

The gardens of the Valley are finally turning into colourful palettes with almond and cherry blossoms. And thousands of tourists are thronging the Valley only to witness these beautiful visuals. These are the first flowers to bloom in a season and Badamwari Garden located at the foothills of Kohi-Maraan mountain on 300 Kanals of



land has more than 1000 almond trees. "I came to know about almond blossoms from our local guide, they recommended this place, we didn't know that there is Japanese cherry blossom in India, and we would get to see it. We thought it would be one or two trees but it's the whole garden, It's such a beautiful spot, I think everyone would

be amazed. Kashmir has been a beautiful surprise for me. We really didn't plan but since spring is a lovely time to visit and everyone here is so genuine and hospitable. We are extremely happy with our visit to the Valley," said a tourist.

A huge number of locals as well as the tourists are arriving at the Almond Garden. The social media sites are already filled with pictures of the Badamwari. The administration is hoping that all the previous records of tourist arrivals would be broken this spring. The tourists already in the Valley are enjoying the view of the bloom.

"This is my first visit to Kashmir and I don't want to leave this beautiful place. It has been two months since I came here, I fell in love with Kashmir. And it is not only Kashmir but the people here are beautiful. The people of the Valley have a golden heart and

great culture, Kashmir is more beautiful than any other part of the world," a tourist said.

The Tourism Department is planning to celebrate the full spring season across the various gardens of the Srinagar City. The festival will start from Badamwari as almond flowers are first to bloom.

Officials of the Floriculture Department Kashmir said the garden will be in its full glory in a couple of days and will witness full bloom. He said the tourists have already started thronging the place and they are hopeful of having a jam packed spring season in Badamwari this year too.

"As of now only 50 percent of almond trees are in bloom but in a few days the garden will witness complete bloom. Apart from almonds, different varieties of flowers are also present which make the garden more breathtaking and colourful," he added.

Director Agriculture Jammu unveils Glass House at Agronomist Vegetable Improvement Scheme Premises



STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Director Agriculture Jammu Arvinder Singh Reen on Thursday unveiled a glass house within the premises of the Agronomist Vegetable Improvement Scheme at Directorate of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Talab Tillo, Jammu here. This groundbreaking initiative marks a pivotal moment in enhancing Agricultural Research Production and Sustainability in the region. The Director Agriculture Jammu, alongside key stakeholders, unveiled the glass house, symbolizing a commitment to modernizing agricultural infrastructure and fostering scientific advancements in farming techniques. The glass house, equipped with improved technology, serves as a controlled environment conducive to the cultivation of high value vegetable crops. Its climate controlled features allow for precise regulation of temperature, humidity, and light intensity, creating optimal conditions for plant growth throughout the year. This innovative facility promises the concept of vegetable forcing to revolutionize Agricultural Research and Production by enabling year round cultivation, maximizing crop yields, and minimizing environmental impact.

The Director Agriculture Jammu emphasized the significance of such initiatives in promoting agricultural sustainability and addressing the challenges posed by climate change and fluctuating environmental conditions. He highlighted the glass house's role as a hub for research and development, fostering collaboration between scientists, farmers, and industry stakeholders to drive agricultural innovation and productivity. The glass house signals a collective resolve to harness technology, innovation, and scientific expertise to overcome challenges and unlock the full potential of agriculture in the region.

The Director Agriculture Jammu reaffirmed his department's commitment to spearheading initiatives that foster sustainable growth, empower farmers, and propel Jammu towards a brighter, more prosperous future. Besides Joint Directors, Deputy Directors, Agronomist, District Officers and other agricultural officials were present on the occasion.

Material & Emotional exploitation of voter citizen can be checked if Government Schools & Hospitals are made to 'Deliver'

Govt. Schools are available still Child Education Allowance @Rs.2250 & Child HSA @ Rs 6750 is paid to Government Employees Educational Empowerment of Socially - Economically - Administratively "Depressed Citizens" can only reduce their Exploitation

DAYA SAGAR

Imagine how miserably were the Indian people placed economically and Administratively & politically when India got independence in 1947 from the fact that in 1949 constitution of India was drafted with provisions for special political / administrative support only for some identified socially & educationally backward classes/ depressed classes {SC (only from those practicing Hindu religion) and ST } only from amongst the citizens of India inspite of there being also provisions there in for Equality before law ; Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth: Equality of opportunity in matters of public employment etc. and even after 75 years of independence in 2024 not only the provisions for SC/St are still there but in addition many more backward / other backward classes have been identified where though not for political support (reservations) atleast need has been felt / reservations have been additionally provided more than what has been kept for SC/ ST in professional institutions and administration (appointment in government services , even in promotions) but still as per government disclosures India have 81 Cr (81,000,00,00) Indian citizens who need to be provided / are being provided / will be provided atleast for another 4 to 5 years just 5 kg of food grains free of cost per month. One can well imagine what could be economic status of majority of Indian population in 1947 and what has been the spirit behind the Preamble to Constitution of India saying



A Look through the Mist Part-II

which say < :: "We, the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic.

Had we been able to provide quality education to the under privileged from amongst us instead of symbolic material assistances / subsidies the numbers needing special supports would have reduced over the years instead of increasing. Governments have spent billions of rupees on the school education infrastructure and inspite the teachers in government schools having much much superior wage structure and job security in comparison to most of the private schools /academies even those employed in school education departments are not found sending their own wards in government schools even in cities what to talk of villages, This sends a wrong message to common people about the quality of education imparted in Government Schools to the extent that these days even a labour earning just Rs.500 a day through his/ her hard labour is seen rushing to a local private school / academy where he/ she pays a tuition fee of Rs 300 to Rs.1000 per month per child and also spends similar amount for private tuition after school even when Government pays atleast Rs. 50000 plus other special allowances to a lowest level undergraduate school teacher where as the teachers in private academies are mostly being paid not more than Rs. 10000 to Rs.15000 per month with almost no job security (see table A). The teachers teaching higher classes in government schools are paid much higher.

TABLE- A Basis > (1) Dearness Allowance @ 46% of basic pay wef 01 July 2023 (2) TA/Transport Allowance/PM G.O No. 472-F of 2019 of 28.11.2019 Cities like Jammu (3) HRA-House Rent Allowance @16% of basic pay (4) CHA- **Child Education Allowance @Rs.2250/pm /per child Max 4500 G.O No. 473-F 28.11.2019 (5) CHSA-***Child Hostel Subsidy Allowance 6750 per child Max 13500/pm G.O No. 473-F 28.11.2019

Level of staff	Pay Scale	Min Basic	DA	T. Allowance	HR 16%	Child EA	Child HSA	Total Min Salary/pm
Teacher (UG) L 4	25500-81100	25500	11730	1350x1.46 =1971	4080	4500	13500	Rs 43281 plus 18000 max
Teacher (G) L 5	29200-92300	29200	13432	1800x1.46 =2688	4672	4500	13500	Rs 50184 plus ***18000 max
Dir School Edu IAS or KAS L 13	123100-215900	123100	56626	3600x1.46= 5256	19696	4500	13500	Rs.204678 plus18000max

Hence most of the socially backward and economically 'poor' parents are not able to afford / to provide competitive education to their children and where ever they manage some college education they cannot afford to improve their competitive quality of education of their wards through further coaching / private tutoring in comparison to economically equipped parents and hence any special assistance provided through reservations etc even to SC/ST/OBC majority cannot be made use of on ground for quality higher education or / and for securing superior positions in government services , what to talk of economically poor parents from general classes.

To be continued (The writer is Sr Journalist, social activist and analyst J&K affairs).