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## CIED-IUST SECURES STARTUP GRANT OF RS 50 LAKH FROM JKEDI

The Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development, Islamic University of Science and Technology (CIED-IUST), has secured a startup grant of Rs 50 lakh in the 'Idea to Impact Startup Mela,' organised by JKEDI at Jammu. The award was presented by Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Omar Abdullah, to IUST team led by Prof. Shakil Ahmad Romshoo, Vice Chancellor, IUST, on January 29. Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Romshoo commended Prof Parvez Ahmad Mir, Director, CIED, for nurturing entrepreneurial culture among the youth. He said, IUST has already adopted startup policy, whereby students can be entrepreneurs in residence and "translate their ideas into commercial ventures."

Prof. Romshoo also thanked the government for their continued support. He added that innovation and

entrepreneurship feature as priority in the Institutional Development Plan of IUST. Meanwhile, GR8 (manufacturer of Kashmiri willow bats) was conferred with the outstanding Entrepreneurship and Startup Award. Pertinently, Advisor to the CM, Nasir Aslam Wani, Commissioner Secretary Industries and Commerce, Vikramjit Singh and Director JKEDI, Khalid Jahangir, were also present on the occasion. Tomention, CIEDIUST operates multiple schemes including Skill to Enterprise Model (STEM) in collaboration with Small Industries Development Bank of India, Startup India Seed Fund Schemes (SISFS), Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Government of India, and others, for the strengthening of startup ecosystem.

## IUST CELEBRATES 77TH REPUBLIC DAY; VC UNFURLS TRICOLOUR

To mark the 77th Republic Day, Vice Chancellor, Islamic University of Science Technology (IUST), Prof. Shakil Ahmad Romshoo, unfurled the National Flag at the main campus of the University on January 26. Addressing the gathering, Prof. Romshoo highlighted the importance of the Republic Day, saying that by commemorating this day, "we reaffirm our commitment to the constitutional ideals of equality, fraternity and justice."

He reflected on the role of educational institutions in the development of the nation and of realising the goal of Viksit Bharat. "Education is an important tool of transformation, progress and prosperity for the country," he said.

Prof. Romshoo referred to the paradigm shift in the wake of National Education Policy, 2020, and said that the focus is now more on skilling, vocational education, multidisciplinary learning, innovation and entrepreneurship. "The objective of nurturing of our youth is coming true," he said. About IUST's focus on innovation and entrepreneurship, he said, the IUST's Startup support ecosystem is being recognised and acknowledged at the national level. He congratulated the CIED IUST incubatee, GR8 (manufacturers of Kashmir willow cricket bats), for being conferred with the Award for Outstanding Industrial Entrepreneurship by the government of



Photo: Zahoor Ahmad/IUST

Jammu and Kashmir on the eve of Republic Day, 2026. Prof. Romshoo further said, IUST's Institutional Development Plan, among other things, lays special focus on promoting innovations, research, entrepreneurship, skilling and sports. He said, IUST shall have a state-of-the-art sports campus to nurture youth for national and international sporting events. In this regard, he said, the University will invite international sports icons to mentor the students. The Republic Day ceremony was attended by the employees of the university including Deans of schools, Heads of various departments and centres, University officials and the security contingent.

## BUILDING RESILIENCE ON CAMPUS: IUST'S CENTRE FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

ARSHINA ASLAM

Disasters can strike anytime and anywhere. While their occurrence may be beyond human control, the level of preparedness and response determines the extent of their impact. Recognising this reality, the Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) took a significant step towards strengthening disaster preparedness through the establishment of its Centre for Disaster Risk Reduction (CDRR). Established in 2024, the Centre aims to build awareness, preparedness and resilience among students, faculty members and other stakeholders. Speaking about the vision and mission of the Centre, Dr. Irfan Maqbool, Coordinator of CDRR, states that the initiative was the

need of the hour, especially in a region like Jammu and Kashmir, which is highly vulnerable to multiple natural hazards. "The primary mission of the Centre is to conduct research on the hazards that we commonly face in J&K, such as earthquakes, landslides, flash floods and floods," says Dr. Maqbool. He adds that another major objective is to enhance the capacity of people and government stakeholders to minimise disaster risks that recur almost every year in the Kashmir Valley. "While disasters cannot be completely prevented, effective measures can significantly reduce their impact," he notes. Dr. Maqbool emphasises that the establishment of the Centre filled a long-standing gap at the university. "The creation of this Centre was a timely and important

decision, and we are committed to taking its vision forward," he says. As part of its outreach and preparedness efforts, the Centre actively conducts awareness and training programmes. Pertinently, earthquakes pose the most serious threat to the region due to its location in the Himalayan belt, followed closely by floods. To address these challenges, the Centre recently received Rupees 35 lakh funding from the Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction, Government of Jammu and Kashmir. "This support enables us to train and sensitise various government departments, such as Irrigation and Flood Control and Roads and Buildings (R&B), introducing

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# IUST PROMOTES URDU LANGUAGE THROUGH DEDICATED CENTRE

NAZAKAT ASLAM

Language is more than a means of communication—it is a reflection of people’s history, culture and collective consciousness. At a time when many regional and classical languages are struggling to retain relevance among younger generations, the Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) has taken a significant step towards safeguarding and revitalising Urdu through the establishment of the Centre for Promotion of Urdu Language and Literature.

Urdu, often described as a language of elegance and emotional depth, has long been a carrier of literary heritage in the Indian subcontinent. Yet, in today’s fast-paced, technology-driven world, its use, particularly among the youth—has seen a gradual decline. Addressing this gap, IUST initiated a dedicated Centre to re-establish Urdu as a living, evolving, and socially relevant language.

## A Vision Born from Public Demand and Policy Support

The idea of establishing the Centre did not emerge in isolation. According to Dr. Afshana, Coordinator of the Centre, the initiative was shaped by both community engagement and national policy priorities.

“Before the Centre was established, we received several representations from civil society suggesting that a Centre for the promotion of Urdu language and literature should be set up at this university,” she reveals.

She further explains that the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which lays strong emphasis on Indian languages, also played a crucial role in the decision-making process.

“The policy clearly talks about Indian languages, including Urdu. Keeping this in view, IUST decided to establish this Centre, and in 2024, it was formally approved by the Executive Council,” Dr. Afshana divulges.

## More Than Preservation: Making Urdu Relevant Again

The Centre for the Promotion of Urdu Language and Literature aims to go beyond symbolic preservation. Its mission is to actively engage society, especially students and young scholars—with Urdu in ways that resonate with contemporary realities.

“The objective and vision of this Centre is to take the great literary tradition of Urdu language and literature to the national and international level,” says Dr. Afshana.

She adds that the Centre plans to organise workshops, seminars and conferences that not only celebrate classical Urdu literature but also encourage critical engagement and creative expression.

## Bridging the Gap Between Urdu and Technology

One of the key challenges faced today is the growing distance between Urdu and modern technology. As digital platforms increasingly shape communication and learning, languages that fail to adapt risk marginalisation.

“Today, everything is connected to technology. That is why it is important to present Urdu in technology in such a way that future generations also find it interesting,” says Dr. Afshana.

To address this, the Centre plans to introduce technology-oriented courses and academic programmes designed to integrate Urdu with digital tools, research methodologies and modern modes of expression.

“The purpose of this Centre is to create interest and passion for Urdu language and literature in the new generation. Through courses, workshops and conferences, we want young people to reconnect with the language,” she adds.

## Keeping Urdu Alive

The establishment of the Centre stands as a timely intervention

in an era of linguistic transition. It reinforces the idea that Urdu is not merely a language of the past, but a living reality capable of adapting to the present and shaping the future. With sincere effort and thoughtful integration of technology, Urdu can once again find a strong footing among the youth—ensuring that its rich literary and cultural legacy continues to thrive.

## CENTRE FOR URDU LANGUAGE CONVENES MAIDEN BOARD OF STUDIES MEETING

The Centre for the Promotion of Urdu Language and Literature convened its first Board of Studies meeting on January 22.



Photo: Zahoor Ahmad/ IUST

The meeting was held under the chairpersonship of the Dr. Afroz Ahmad Bisati, Dean, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, IUST, in the Meeting Hall of the Academic Block-X. It was conducted to further the aims and objectives of the Centre.

Welcoming the Board members, Dr. Afshana, Coordinator of the Centre, shared a brief overview of the Centre and its vision. Dr. Bisati spoke about the University’s achievements and emphasised the significant role of the Centre. The members actively shared their valuable suggestions for the Centre’s growth and future development.

At the end of the meeting, Dr. Javaid Rasool Sheikh expressed his sincere thanks to all the members for their thoughtful contributions and participation.

## CIED-IUST FOUNDATION ORGANISES INNOVATE X 1.0 UNDER MISSION YUVA

The CIED-IUST Foundation organised a one-day Innovate X 1.0: Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Programme under the Mission YUVA initiative for aspiring entrepreneurs on January 21. Around 100 participants, including 20 odd startups, participated in the programme.

Addressing the gathering, Prof. Parvez A. Mir, CEO, CIED-IUST Foundation, underlined the significance of the newly launched Mission YUVA scheme of the J&K government. He encouraged participants to register on the Mission YUVA portal to avail funding and support. A video presentation demonstrating the registration process was also screened. Finance Officer, IUST, Sameer Wazir, provided an overview of the CIED-IUST Foundation and explained the mentoring, support and



IUST Photo

funding opportunities available to young entrepreneurs.

Coordinator, Entrepreneurship Development Cell, Dr. Basharat Nabi Dar, deliberated upon the growing scope of food entrepreneurship. He informed the participants about food technology startups and laboratory facilities available at the Foundation. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by Syed Abdul Basit, CEO, DST i-TBI at CIED-IUST Foundation, who urged the participants to leverage the Mission YUVA scheme for developing successful entrepreneurial ventures. Participants were also guided on submitting applications under the scheme.

The inaugural session was also attended by Dr. Mohammad Asif Bashir Naqshbandi, Coordinator, IPR Cell, members of the CIED-IUST Foundation, budding entrepreneurs, and students from various schools and colleges.

## RUMI LIBRARY ORGANISES WEBINAR ON ORCID

The Rumi Library, Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), organised the webinar ‘Enhancing Research Visibility and Use of ORCID’ in collaboration with the Department of Library and Information Science, Central University of Himachal Pradesh, on January 15.

The webinar aimed to create awareness among faculty members and research scholars about the relevance of having a unique digital identity as a researcher. It highlighted the benefits of integrating ORCID with leading publishers and research databases in terms of improving citation indexing, research impact and institutional visibility.

Welcoming the participants, Dr. Sheikh Mohammad Imran, University Librarian, highlighted the importance of ORCID in connecting researchers to all their scholarly activities, including publications, grants, peer reviews and affiliations, across the systems. He explained how ORCID increases the visibility of work and saves time by automating updates across publishers,

fundings, and institutions, making it “a vital tool for modern research integrity and recognition.”

Highlighting the importance of having an ORCID ID in the digital age, Dr. Shivarama Rao K, Project Director, ORCID, and Professor at Department of Library and Information Science, Central University of Himachal Pradesh (CUHP), deliberated on the collaborative effort of both the universities in the interest of the researchers. Resource-person for the session, Rupinder Singh, Assistant Librarian, University of Punjab, delivered a detailed PowerPoint presentation, explaining the process of creating and updating the ORCID ID. He also provided the insights about the persistent digital identifier.

The participants were also introduced to the mechanics of ORCID registration and the utilization of the ORCID. The presentation was followed by a question-answer session and a formal vote of thanks by IUST Librarian.

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them to new and effective disaster management methods,” says Dr. Maqbool. The Centre has been conducting workshops to sensitize people about disaster risk reduction.

Addressing common misconceptions about disaster

preparedness, Dr. Maqbool points out flaws in modern construction practices. He explains that traditional structures such as dhajji-dewari houses were more seismic-resistant compared to many modern constructions. “Today, in plains as well as hilly areas, we see buildings that are more vulnerable to earthquakes. In

the pursuit of modern designs, people are unknowingly increasing their exposure to risk,” he observes.

IUST has positioned itself as a proactive institution committed to safety, preparedness and community resilience—an initiative that holds immense relevance for the university and the region at large.

# 'DISASTER CONSCIOUSNESS KEY TO DISASTER PREPAREDNESS'

Following a major improvements to the India's earthquake hazard map by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), Jammu and Kashmir has been placed in the newly identified Seismic Zone 6, the highest-risk category in the country. The reclassification has sparked widespread discussion on what this change means for the region, particularly in terms of construction practices, urban planning, disaster management, and public preparedness.

In an exclusive interview with Journalism and Mass Communication student, **NAZAKAT ASLAM, Professor Shakil Ahmad Romshoo, Vice Chancellor of the Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST)**, shares his insights on the scientific basis of the new classification and the urgent need to build a culture of disaster preparedness in Jammu and Kashmir. Prof. Romshoo is a renowned earth and environmental scientist with over 37 years of experience in research on hydrology, glaciology, climate change and natural hazards, particularly in the Himalayan region. He has also served on several policy-making committees and working groups on earth and environmental sciences at state, national, and international level.

## Q: Scientifically speaking, what does the new Seismic Zone 6 classification mean for Jammu and Kashmir?

A: Scientifically, the new Seismic Zone 6 classification formally recognizes the exceptionally high seismic hazard of Jammu and Kashmir. The region lies within the tectonically active Himalayan belt, where the ongoing collision between the Indian and Eurasian plates continuously accumulates strain along major fault systems.

While Jammu and Kashmir is bestowed with most beautiful landscapes in the world, it is also among the most disaster-prone regions in the world and also highly vulnerable to earthquakes.

You name any disaster-earthquakes, floods, landslides or avalanches and Jammu and Kashmir figures among the most disaster vulnerable regions. Among all these hazards, earthquakes remain the most serious threat.

Historically, Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed some of the largest earthquakes in the Himalayan region. The recent 2005 Muzaffarabad earthquake, with a magnitude of 7.6, caused widespread devastation and loss of life. Historical records show a major earthquake around 1555, estimated to be close to magnitude 8, which had severe impacts, including loss of life and property, across the valley. The past events demonstrate that the seismic risk is deeply rooted in the geological setting of the region. So, our seismic vulnerability is not new.

Prior to this new seismic categorization, different parts of Jammu and Kashmir were classified under Seismic Zones V and IV. Zone VI classification of the entire Jammu and Kashmir under the updated scientific reassessment, reinforces what historical and geological data has long indicated- that Jammu and Kashmir is extremely vulnerable to large damaging earthquakes.

From a long-term perspective, major earthquakes follow a recurrence cycle on the order of around 500 years. The revised classification is therefore a precautionary and scientifically justified step, intended to highlight the seriousness of the seismic risk and to guide stronger building codes, land-use planning, and disaster preparedness measures.

## Q: What does this reclassification mean for construction and public safety in the region?

A: In practical terms, the reclassification means that planners, policymakers, government authorities, communities and individual citizens alike, must treat seismic safety as a non-negotiable priority at every level. Any construction activity, whether it involves homes, hospitals, mosques, schools, universities, or any public infrastructure, must incorporate earthquake-resistant design as basic requirement, not an optional add-on.

Public buildings such as hospitals, educational institutions, and religious places, deserve a particular attention because they accommodate large numbers of people. Hospitals operate round the clock, schools host a large number of children for most of the day, and religious places especially mosques, are regularly filled with people several times a day, especially peak gatherings during Friday prayers. God forbid, if a strong earthquake were to strike the region during such times, the risk of casualties would be extremely high.

Responsibility rests at the individual level too. When we build our own house, we must ensure that they are structurally and seismically safe so that our families including parents, elders, and children, remain protected during a major earthquake.

Unfortunately, across Jammu and Kashmir and much of the Himalayan region, there is a weak culture of earthquake-resistant construction. People invest enormous sums in land and buildings, yet often disregard engineers' advice regarding seismic safety, saying that "everything is in Allah's hands." Faith is important, but wisdom requires us to take precautions. Ironically, our traditional Kashmiri architecture reflects this wisdom. Our ancestors would build timber-laced masonry houses built centuries ago that have survived for 200, 300, even 500 years. In contrast, a much of the modern construction is structurally unsafe.

In Srinagar alone, there are nearly 260,000 houses spread



Photo: Zahoor Ahmad/IUST

across 76 municipal wards, and an overwhelming majority (about 99 percent) do not comply with earthquake-resistant building safety codes. This is deeply alarming.

If we compare this scenario with countries like Japan, which are far more seismically active, shows what is possible. Despite experiencing earthquakes far stronger than those experienced here, (2011 earthquake of magnitude 9), earthquakes do not typically cause large-scale building collapse because structures are designed for seismic resilience. Losses may mainly occur due to the consequent tsunamis, not structural failure. Without similar measures, the consequences of a major earthquake in our region would be unimaginable.

## Q: How important is disaster preparedness and institutional awareness in reducing earthquake-related risks?

A: Disaster preparedness is absolutely critical because earthquakes, unlike many other hazards, cannot be predicted with precision. No scientist can predict place, timing and magnitude of an earthquake. Science has not reached to that stage. While we can sometimes forecast weather events or anticipate landslides and avalanches to a certain extent, earthquakes remain unpredictable. This uncertainty makes preparedness not just important but essential.

Preparedness is not only an individual responsibility; it is a collective one, that of the entire society. Institutions, particularly universities like the Islamic University of Science and Technology, have a major role to play in generating knowledge on the subject and building awareness and capacity in the region. In

Kashmir, disaster preparedness is not yet deeply embedded in our culture and societal behavior, and universities must come on the forefront to address this gap systematically. At IUST, for example, we have established a Centre for Disaster Risk Reduction (CDRR), which actively engages with government agencies, policymakers, students, educators, religious leaders, and local communities. Over the past year alone, we have conducted several capacity-building programmes involving imams, educators, government officials, and community representative. These efforts aim to translate scientific knowledge into practical action.

Every stakeholder must contribute. Awareness must reach down to the panchayat, block, and household levels. This is a challenging task, but it is absolutely necessary and unavoidable.

As Vice Chancellor, I consider it as my responsibility to promote a culture where everyone knows how to build resilience, what to do if an earthquake strikes at night, how to build houses safely, and how to respond in offices, schools, and public spaces.

If preparedness education begins early in schools through morning assemblies, and community outreach and if religious leaders also start speaking about disaster preparedness during sermons, awareness will gradually become part of our culture.

I am confident that sustained efforts of this kind can transform Jammu and Kashmir into a disaster-prepared society, significantly reducing loss of life and property from earthquakes, floods, and other hazards.

## Q: Does this new classification mean that a major earthquake is imminent, or how should people interpret the risk without creating undue fear?

A: The purpose of this new classification is not to create fear or panic. There is no scientific method today that can tell us the exact timing, location or magnitude of an earthquake. This uncertainty is precisely why preparedness becomes so much important.

The new seismic zoning simply highlights a risk that has long existed but was underestimated. It is a reminder to remain conscious and vigilant in daily life at all times—whether we are attending duties, public gatherings, schools, or religious events. People should think in advance: If a disaster occurs, what should I do? Where should I move? How should I protect myself and how can I help others?

Japan, where I have lived and worked, is seismically more active than Kashmir but people are trained there about safety measures from a young age and causality levels remain very low due to better preparedness. Even at night, they know how to respond during an earthquake. People keep emergency kits ready, and living spaces are designed to reduce injury risks and damage. This is the level of preparedness we must aspire to—not fear but informed readiness.

## Q: If you were to leave our readers with one key takeaway from today's discussion, what would it be?

A: The most important takeaway is that disaster risk reduction requires a strong sense of collective responsibility towards disasters in Kashmir. This responsibility does not lie with one individual or one institution alone. Every individual, every community, and every institution has a role to play.

If we work together to build awareness, promote preparedness and adopt safer practices, it is absolutely possible to reduce disaster-related losses.

This change in mindset—this evolution in how we think about risk and safety can only happen through collective efforts and sustained action.

# ADMIN-C WINS 6TH VICE CHANCELLOR'S EMPLOYEES CRICKET TOURNAMENT

The Admin-C team emerged victorious in the 6th Vice Chancellor's Employees Cricket Tournament (Men) 2025, defeating the School of Engineering and Technology (SOET), in a closely contested final match held at the Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST).

The tournament was organised by the Directorate of Physical Education and Sports, IUST, reflecting the university's continued commitment to promoting sports, fitness and camaraderie among the employees.

In the final match, SOET won the toss and elected to field first. Batting first, Admin-C posted a competitive total of 79 runs for the loss of seven wickets in 12 overs. In response, SOET put up a spirited chase, but could manage 71 runs for the loss of eight wickets,



falling short by eight runs.

The concluding ceremony witnessed the distribution of medals and the championship trophy among the players and officials.

IUST Photo

Registrar, IUST, Prof. Abdul Wahid Makhdoomi, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest, while Dr. G. N. Itoo, Director, Centre for Good Governance and Policy Analysis, Sameer Wazir, Finance Officer, and Deans of various Schools, attended the event as Guests of Honour.

In his closing speech, Dr. Hilal Ahmad Rather, Assistant Director, Directorate of Physical Education and Sports, congratulated the winning team and appreciated the sportsmanship spirit shown by all participating teams. He emphasized that such tournaments play a vital role in fostering unity, teamwork and a healthy work culture within the university.

The opening ceremony was carried out by Dr. Mubashir, Assistant Director, while the match referees were Majid Mukhdoomi, Senior Sports Assistant, and Altaf Hussain, Sports Assistant. The tournament concluded on a high note, celebrating the spirit of sportsmanship and collective participation among university employees.

## IUST BAGS 5 MEDALS IN 3RD CHANCELLOR'S TOURNAMENT



The Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) bagged five silver medals in Table Tennis in the 3rd Chancellor's tournament, organised by the University of Jammu, which saw participation of 19 institutions across the North Zone, on January 20.

Congratulating the participants Prof. Shakil Ahmad Romshoo said that IUST has always given immense importance on the extra-curricular activities. "IUST has the distinction of conducting extra-curricular activities thereby incentivizing students' participation," he said.

Prof Romshoo added that the University has framed a sports action plan catering to setting up of standard infrastructure besides envisaging engagement of nationally and internationally recognized sports persons as Professors of Practice.

The IUST contingent was accompanied by Dr. Hilal Ahmad Rather, Assistant Director, Physical Education and Sports, as In-charge and Manager, and Majid Nazir Mukhdoomi, Senior Sports Assistant, as Coach.

## IUST CONDUCTS DESIGN THINKING, 3D PRINTING WORKSHOP AT UNIVERSITY OF LADAKH



The University of Ladakh, in collaboration with iHUB Divyasampark, IIT Roorkee, and Design Your Own Degree (DYoD) programme, Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), concluded a 10-day workshop on Design Thinking and 3D Printing at its Kargil Campus from December 29, 2025 to January 8, 2026. The workshop witnessed the participation of 38 students from various institutes and disciplines, aiming to enhance hands-on skills in emerging Industry 4.0 technologies.

A key academic contribution to the workshop was made by IUST's DYoD Programme. Assistant Professor, Design and Innovation Centre (DIC), IUST, Taha Mughal, delivered a three-day online workshop on Design Thinking, focusing on it as a systematic and user-centric process for product design, and innovation. The sessions emphasised problem identification, ideation, prototyping and solution development.

Complementing this, Dr Mohd Afzal Bhat, Associated Faculty DYoD from the Department of Mechanical Engineering, delivered a key lecture on emerging tools and technologies in 3D printing highlighting recent advancements and applications in additive manufacturing. The initiative was conducted as a collaborative effort involving the DIC IUST, NIELIT Ladakh, NIC Ladakh, IIT Roorkee, and the faculty of the University of Ladakh, ensuring both conceptual depth and hands-on learning for participants.

During the valedictory session, Prof. Saket Kushwaha, Vice Chancellor, University of Ladakh, emphasised the importance of modern technologies and the need for a skilled workforce for regional and national development. He appreciated the collaborative efforts and encouraged future initiatives such as hackathons on Industry 4.0 technologies.

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