2-day national conference on emerging technologies for governance, development planning in J&K begins at IUST

Awantipora, Nov 17: The Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) commenced its two-day National Conference on 'Emerging Technologies for Governance and Development Planning in Jammu and Kashmir: Policy and Implementation' on Tuesday. The conference is being organised by the Centre for Good Governance and Policy Analysis (CGG&PA), IUST, in collaboration with the Centre for Good Governance (CGG), Hyderabad, and the Information Technology Department, Government of Jammu and Kashmir.

Minister for Health, Medical Education and Social Welfare, J&K, Ms. Sakina Masood Itoo, who graced the occasion as chief guest, said, technology can make government services more transparent and accessible, especially in the health sector, where difficult terrain and seasonal cut-offs hinder timely care. Digital systems, she said, can map remote habitations, track ambulances, flag high-risk pregnancies, enable tele-consultation and ensure early detection of outbreaks.

She said, while e-UNNAT with 1500+ services denotes a significant progress, digital governance must ensure accountability beyond online availability. She added that Artificial Intelligence can assist doctors in diagnosis in underserved areas, but must not replace human supervision with strict protection of patient data. "Universities must go beyond classrooms to become centres of research and innovation, collaborating with departments and hospitals to develop practical solutions for J&K," said Ms. Itoo, who also inaugurated the Faculty Residential Quarters at IUST Main Campus.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Shakil Ahmad Romshoo, Vice Chancellor, IUST, highlighted that the Centre for Good Governance and Policy Analysis, established just a year ago, has emerged as one of the University's most vibrant and proactive centres, fostering meaningful engagement between academia and policymaking.

Expressing confidence that the two-day conference would generate valuable insights, institutional partnerships and practical policy recommendations, Prof. Romshoo emphasised, "The conference must culminate in a focused and actionable Policy and Implementation Roadmap for Technology-Enabled Governance in J&K, identifying high-impact interventions that can be piloted, evaluated and scaled across departments and districts."

He further underscored, **"**Our vision must be a Jammu and Kashmir where every village, institution and citizen benefits from intelligent, inclusive and sustainable governance, with technology serving as an instrument of transparency, accountability and equitable development**."**

In his special remarks, Shri Ravi Gupta, IPS (Rtd.), Executive Vice President and Director General, Centre for Good Governance (CGG), Hyderabad, said, emerging technologies such as AI, ML, deep learning and cloud can help identify systemic gaps, check collusive corruption and trace money trails while protecting honest officers. He stressed that citizens trust government with their personal data and that it is incumbent upon government to keep it secure.

Patron, IIPA Jammu and member, National Security Advisory Board, Shri Ashok Bhan, IPS (Rtd.), said, good governance must be achieved through optimum utilization of available resources, catalysed by technology, innovation and change, with an ecosystem built on transparency, accountability, zero tolerance to corruption and citizen centricity.

He stressed that citizens must be taken on board in initiatives like smart cities, with technology used to capture aspirations and build capacity to use services. He noted that grievance redressal models like Sevottam, though well-conceived, remain rule-bound and lack empathy, and called for systems combining technological efficiency with human sensitivity.

Earlier, Dr. G. N. Itoo, Director, CGG&PA presented the welcome address and set the context for the conference. The formal vote of thanks was proposed by Prof. Shamim Ahmad Shah, Registrar, IUST. The inaugural session held at Lal Ded auditorium of IUST also featured screening of a documentary featuring achievements of IUST and CGG&PA. Following the inaugural session, various technical sessions were held at the Conference Hall, Rumi Library.

To mention, the two-day conference aims to deliberate on policy frameworks and implementation strategies for leveraging emerging technologies to strengthen good governance and development planning in J&K. The conference has been sponsored by the Information Technology Department, Government of J&K, and Jammu and Kashmir Bank Ltd, and Renewable Energy Pvt. Ltd.

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