

**LG Ladakh inaugurates Udyamitsav & PRAGYAAN 2026 at IIT Jammu Says Innovation, entrepreneurship & scientific temper foundations of nation-building Youth will lead India towards Viksit Bharat 2047: LG Ladakh Udyamitsav symbolises India's journey from ideas to innovation & startups to nation-building IIT Jammu emerging as hub of research, innovation and startup culture; shaping New India's future Proposes Ladakh Admin-IIT Jammu MoU to boost innovation, entrepreneurship in border areas**

Jammu, Feb 7: The Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Shri Kavinder Gupta, today inaugurated Udyamitsav and PRAGYAAN 2026 at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Jammu, Jagti Campus, calling the initiatives a powerful reflection of India's innovation-driven future.

Addressing students, innovators and educators, the Lieutenant Governor said that innovation, entrepreneurship and scientific temperament are the true foundations of nation-building. He underlined that premier institutions like IIT Jammu are not just centres of education, but laboratories for shaping the future of New India.

Shri Kavinder Gupta said Udyamitsav symbolises India's journey from ideas to innovation, from startups to nation-building. He lauded the participation of nearly 1,000 young entrepreneurs from Jammu & Kashmir and neighbouring regions, describing them as job creators whose solutions address local challenges with global relevance.

Speaking on PRAGYAAN 2026, the Lieutenant Governor said it is more than a science exhibition—it is a movement that nurtures curiosity and scientific thinking among children. He noted that such platforms inspire young minds to ask questions, experiment and develop a spirit of discovery, laying the foundation for future scientists and innovators.

Referring to the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 envisioned by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, Shri Kavinder Gupta said India's youth will be the driving force behind transforming the country into a global innovation powerhouse. He emphasised that government policies are focused on empowering youth, promoting startups and strengthening research and innovation ecosystems.

Sharing his recent experience at the University of Ladakh, the Lieutenant Governor highlighted the presence of world-class laboratories and modern research infrastructure in the high-altitude region. He said these facilities are enabling youth from border and remote areas to access global-quality education and research opportunities.

Highlighting the immense potential of Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir and Himalayan regions, Shri Kavinder Gupta said these areas offer vast opportunities in green technologies, agri-startups, tourism innovation and digital services. He added that geographical challenges are now emerging as strengths with focused policy support.

The Lieutenant Governor praised IIT Jammu for emerging as a hub of research, innovation and startup culture, and commended its faculty for shaping the architects of New India. He also proposed exploring a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ladakh Administration and IIT Jammu to promote innovation and entrepreneurship among students and researchers, particularly from border areas.

Concluding his address, Shri Kavinder Gupta urged the youth to innovate fearlessly, learn from failures and contribute actively to India's progress. He expressed confidence that Udyamitsav 2026 and PRAGYAAN 2026 will generate new ideas, nurture enterprises and strengthen India's position as a global innovation leader.

Welcoming the dignitaries and participants, Prof. Manoj Singh Gaur, Director, IIT Jammu, highlighted the Institute's vision of building a vibrant ecosystem that promotes innovation, entrepreneurship, and experiential learning. He noted that platforms such as Udyamitsav and PRAGYAAN serve as vital bridges between academia and society, offering meaningful exposure to students, particularly school students, by connecting classroom learning with hands-on experience, research, and creative exploration.

Dr. Vijay Kumar Pal, Faculty-in-Charge, shared that students from across India are participating in a wide range of activities including a startup expo, fintech competitions, CXO roundtable discussions, finance quizzes, and a mock IPL auction. These engagements aim to cultivate entrepreneurial competencies such as decision-making, teamwork, risk assessment, and leadership, while aligning with the vision of Make in India by encouraging innovation and job creation.

Presenting the vision of PRAGYAAN 2026 – Curiosity to Creation, Dr. Yogesh M. Nimdeo, Faculty-in-Charge, highlighted PRAGYAAN as IIT Jammu's flagship Open Day and a large-scale STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) outreach initiative. Designed as an experiential bridge between school education and higher learning, PRAGYAAN seeks to transform curiosity into hands-on creation and classrooms into gateways of innovation.

This year, PRAGYAAN 2026 is hosting over 6,000 students and educators from schools across Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh, making it one of IIT Jammu's largest academic outreach initiatives. The campus has been transformed into a living laboratory with over 130 exhibition stalls and more than 45 indoor and outdoor scientific and creative activities, featuring innovation exhibits, live demonstrations, maker spaces, ProtoSpace and Tinkerers' Lab walkthroughs, and direct interactions with IIT Jammu students and faculty.

Special emphasis has also been placed on educator and leadership engagement through initiatives such as Rubrics, a structured programme for teachers focusing on pedagogy, assessment, and technology-enabled learning, and the Principals' Conclave, which provides a forum to deliberate on sustainable STEAM ecosystems and long-term school-IIT collaboration. Creative expression forms an integral part of PRAGYAAN through platforms such as Rangmanch, along with initiatives like the Junior Open STEAM Hackathon and STEAM Innovation Challenge 2026, encouraging inquiry-driven, socially relevant problem-solving.

Following the inaugural session, the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor visited the robotics and innovation stalls, where students showcased projects including a drone demonstration, science kits, a robotic hand, and live painting, reflecting a confluence of technology, creativity, and interdisciplinary thinking. He interacted with student innovators and appreciated their ideas and presentations. The Chief Guest also undertook a brief tour of the IIT Jammu campus, where he was apprised of the Institute's academic infrastructure, research facilities, and ongoing initiatives.

The inaugural ceremony was attended by Prof. M. T. Arvind, Chief Innovation Officer; Prof. Anurag Misra, Dean (IPM); Dr. Ankit Kathuria, Faculty-in-Charge (Sponsorship), along with senior officials, faculty members, industry experts, students, and visiting school representatives.



