

Shri Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurates Grand Finale of Smart India Hackathon 2024

Students are drivers of Viksit Bharat and their innovation and zeal can find solutions to the challenges of the world - Shri Dharmendra Pradhan

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Union Minister for Education, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, virtually inaugurated the Grand Finale of the Smart India Hackathon 2024 today. Union Minister of State for Education and Development of the North Eastern Region, Dr. Sukanta Majumdar was present at the inauguration. Secretary, Ministry of Education, Shri Sanjay Kumar; Chairperson NETF, Prof. Anil Sahasrabudhe; Vice Chairman, AICTE, Dr. Abhay Jere; and other officials were also present at the event. Chairman, AICTE, Prof. T. G. Sitharam and other academicians, students and mentors joined virtually from various centres spread across the country. The Hackathon is taking place in 51 such centres concurrently.



Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, in his address, expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi for inspiring with the vision of SIH, which has become a hotspot of innovation and creativity where students from across the country put their minds to find solutions to contemporary challenges. Students are the drivers of a Viksit Bharat and their innovation and zeal can find solutions to the challenges of the world, he said. He also highlighted that the talent, vision, hard work, leadership and innovation of the youth of the country will pave the way for India to emerge as

a 21st-century knowledge economy, a development model for emerging economies, as well as the growth engine of the world.

Dr. Sukanta Majumdar, while addressing the event, emphasized how SIH has transformed challenges into opportunities, paving the way for young minds to contribute to nation-building. Highlighting the growing participation of women in the hackathon, he noted that this marks a significant step toward inclusivity, with each team comprising of at least one female member. He remarked that the contribution of women serves as a reminder that gender equality is not merely a goal but a necessity for sustainable progress. Dr. Majumdar also commended the Ministry of Education's Innovation Cell for fostering an ecosystem for innovators. He stated that it is empowering students to transform ideas into impactful realities, promoting entrepreneurship, and advancing a culture of self-reliance.

Shri Sanjay Kumar, in his address, emphasized how the concept of innovation has firmly taken root in our minds and the culture of educational institutions. He expressed gratitude to Shri Dharmendra Pradhan for his consistent guidance in steering the Ministry toward scaling efforts and fostering out-of-the-box thinking. He also highlighted that SIH provides an opportunity to transcend individual brilliance and harness the power of collectivism, as students collaboratively and creatively develop solutions to problems. Reiterating Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat, he underscored that the idea also encompasses self-reliance in thought.

In line with the Prime Minister's vision of youth-led development, the Smart India Hackathon (SIH) is a nationwide initiative to provide students with a platform to solve the pressing problems of Ministries and Departments of the Government, industries and other organizations. Launched in 2017, the Smart India Hackathon has gained massive popularity among young innovators. In the last six editions, innovative solutions have emerged in different domains and stand out as established startups.

The 7th edition of the Smart India Hackathon (SIH) has begun concurrently at 51 centres nationwide today (11th December 2024) . The Software Edition will run nonstop for 36 hours and the Hardware Edition will continue from 11th to 15th December 2024. Like past editions, the student teams will work on either the problem statements given by the Ministries/Departments/Industries or submit their idea in the Student Innovation Category against any of the 17 themes linked to sectors of national importance and national priorities. These are Healthcare, Supply chain & Logistics, Smart Technologies, Heritage & Culture, Sustainability, Education & Skill Development, Water, Agriculture & Food, Emerging Technologies, and Disaster Management.

Some of the interesting problem statements of this year's edition include 'Enhancing Images of Darker Regions on the Moon' presented by ISRO, 'Developing a real-time Ganga Water Quality Monitoring system using AI, satellite data, IoT, and dynamic models' presented by Ministry of Jal Shakti, and 'Developing a Smart Yoga Mat integrated with AI' presented by Ministry of AYUSH.

This year, more than 250 problem statements have been submitted by 54 Ministries, Departments, State Governments, PSUs, and Industries. An impressive 150 % increase has been recorded in internal hackathons at the institute level, growing from over 900 in SIH 2023 to over 2247 in SIH 2024, making this the largest edition so far. More than 86000 teams have participated in SIH 2024 at the institute level and around 49,000 student teams (each consisting of 6 students and 2 mentors) have been recommended by these institutes for the national level round.

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