Union HRD Minister virtually launches World's first-ever Online B.Sc. Degree in Programming and Data Science

First-ever online degree by an IIT to democratize quality education by removing barriers; Applicants can be from any discipline

New Delhi, 30th June 2020

The Union Minister of HRD Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' today virtually launched World's first ever online B.Sc. degree in Programming and Data Science in the presence of Minister of State for HRD, Shri Sanjay Dhotre. The programme has been prepared and offered by the Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras), which is ranked No.1 in India Rankings 2020 by NIRF. This programme is open to anyone who has passed Class XII, with English and Maths at the Class X level, and enrolled in any on-campus UG course. Dr. Pawan Kumar Goenka, Chairman, IIT, Madras, Board of Governors, Director and the faculty of the IIT, Madras, Chairman, AICTE, Prof. Anil Sahasrabudhe, Additional Secretary, MHRD, Shri Rakesh Ranjan and other Senior officials of the Ministry were also present during the launch.

Data Science is one of the fastest growing sectors that is predicted to create 11.5 million jobs by 2026. Online education is a trend being rapidly embraced for high quality education on a large scale. Faculty from IIT Madras are addressing the need of this sector using online education processes and present an inclusive and affordable education model that will extend IIT's reach by orders of magnitude.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPaSP8CY7IU&feature=youtu.be

While addressing the participants Shri Pokhriyal congratulated the team of IIT Madras for the launch of the world's first-ever online B.Sc. degree program in Data Science and Programming. The Minister informed that the current batch of students who are completing their Class XII in 2020 are eligible to apply. Graduates and working professionals can also take up this programme. Shri Pokhriyal added that this unique offering removes

all barriers of age, discipline or geographic location and provides access to a world-class curriculum in data science which is in huge demand for skilled professionals.

The Minister said that IIT Madras has a rich history of continuous innovation and success and its emergence as rank 1 in the NIRF rankings consistently underscores the team's talent, mission and vision. Analysis reveals that every year 7 to 7.5 lakh Indian students go abroad in search of better education and our talent as well as our revenue goes outside the country. Institutions such as IIT Madras have the vision and mission to help the nation move forward on its path to self-reliance by bringing such quality education and unique courses right here in India. Even during this challenging time, when the nation is fighting the COVID-19 pandemic and everyone is forced to be at home, the IITs have come together to innovate for the sake of the nation.

Shri Pokhriyal said that the students who are currently enrolled in a different on-campus program anywhere in India can pursue this degree program without needing to switch careers or courses. Even employers who want to upskill their employees can consider this option without loss of productive time on the job. He further said that the program brightens up job prospects for students in a lucrative field, provides opportunity for working professionals to switch careers and also provides learners an opportunity to get a degree from a recognized institution such as IIT Madras.

Congratulating the IIT Madras team on the launch of the program, Shri Dhotre said that in today's world education is a continuous process. Students and professionals have to continue to upgrade their knowledge to stay competitive and work within the constraints of time and location. This has become even more challenging due to the prevailing COVID situation. He added that the daya science and programming is a field of most significant growth for the industry and with this online degree opportunity in this important area, IIT Madras will be able to reach many more students. He Minister was confident that this course will reach a diversity of learners as it provides multiple entry and exit points and serves as a priceless contribution to the nation.

The programme will be delivered on a state-of-the-art online portal and will attract learners from even remote parts of India where outreach of digital literacy is minimal and will help them stay ahead in their career journeys. To ensure that the online learning platform is closest to a classroom learning experience, the program will have videos from the faculty, weekly assignments and in-person invigilated exams just like any other regular course. The program will hone students' skills in managing data, visualizing patterns to gain managerial

insights, model uncertainties and build models that assist in producing forecasts to make effective business decisions.

This unique online offering will be offered in three different stages - Foundational Programme, Diploma Programme and Degree Programme. At each stage, students will have the freedom to exit from the program and receive a Certificate, Diploma or a Degree, respectively, from IIT Madras. Based on the eligibility, interested candidates will have to fill a form and pay a nominal fee of Rs. 3,000 for the qualifier exam. Learners will get access to the 4 weeks of course content of 4 subjects (Mathematics, English, Statistics and Computational Thinking). These students will go through the course lectures online, submit online assignments and write an in-person qualifier exam at the end of 4 weeks. In contrast to the typical admission processes of IITs which are constrained due to the limited number of in-campus seats, in this programme all students who clear (with an overall score of 50%) the qualifier exam will be eligible to register for the foundational program.

For more details about the programme, please log on to www.onlinedegree.iitm.ac.in.

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