

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
ON THE OCCASION OF PRESENTATION OF THE 4TH VISITOR'S
AWARD AND MEET OF VICE-CHANCELLORS OF CENTRAL
UNIVERSITIES

Rashtrapati Bhavan, May 2, 2018

1. I welcome you all to Rashtrapati Bhavan for the 4th Visitor's Awards and the Meet of the Vice-Chancellors of Central Universities. Today's meeting with you all shall take forward an exercise that began in January this year when Vice-Chancellors of 17 of the new universities amongst you, had met here.
2. Education is a subject I am personally passionate about. It is education that holds the key for the development of our nation and our people. All of you are in the profession of imparting higher education as well as conducting research, and thus play an important role in the making of a modern India.
3. To begin with, let me first congratulate the winners of the Visitor's Awards, 2018. These Awards recognise the outstanding contribution, single-minded devotion and painstaking work put in by the award winners in the pursuit of knowledge. All of you are true achievers and I am sure that your success will inspire other researchers in the central university system to take up meaningful projects in their respective fields.
4. Research and Innovation is the bedrock of advancing knowledge, and knowledge alone holds the key to finding solutions to the problems we face in our world, nation and society. It is sometimes not understood that research is a demanding profession and a researcher is almost always riding a roller coaster. Pursuing research demands constant determination from the researcher as well as full institutional support. Research is not a 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. job and thus our approach towards supporting and promoting a research culture cannot be a pedantic one.

5. We have to emphasise the merits of research and teaching profession in our society at large. This profession offers unique benefits that no other career offers – freedom to ideate and to test and spread those ideas through research and teaching, freedom to make your work schedules, and may I say perhaps freedom from having a 24 by 7 boss too. To use the language of researchers, I believe that no other career has a bigger impact factor. Our researchers create knowledge and our teachers create a civilised, well-educated society.
6. It is due to this appreciation about the importance of research that the meeting with Vice-Chancellors today focuses on issues universities are facing in the promotion of research and innovation. And it is for this very reason that Minister for HRD, Shri Prakash Javadekar and Minister of State, Dr Satya Pal Singh along with officials from the Ministry are present here today. To help you on issues concerning research and innovation, Principal Scientific Advisor, Professor K. Vijay Raghavan is also present. I am sure that their presence will make today's deliberations much more meaningful.
7. There is no doubt that government has a responsibility to promote and support research and innovation in our centres of education. However, there is a specific responsibility that lies with the researchers too. That responsibility is to marry research and innovation to the needs of our country and people. Research and innovation can play an important role in lifting our people out of poverty, ensuring their health and well-being or attaining food and energy security. Researchers and innovators can help develop solutions to the problems we experience on a daily basis – from pollution of our air and water to the traffic jams in our rapidly expanding cities. Universities can also develop mechanisms to support innovation by ordinary people and help such grassroots innovators to further refine their work.
8. I am happy that recipients of the Visitor's Awards this year truly meet the specific responsibility of researchers that I have referred to. Prof. Sanjay K. Jain's work on the development of a drug

delivery system has the potential to make cancer treatment more effective and affordable. The research of Prof. Ashis Kumar Mukherjee on the molecular complexity of the snake venom could also lead to the development of a new drug. Prof. Ashwani Pareek's work towards the development of Stress Tolerant Rice has the potential to enhance the income of rice farmers. The research and publication work of Prof. Pramod K. Nayar in the field of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences covers several socially relevant areas including poetry for the under-privileged. It is gratifying to note that good quality research, which serves the larger purpose of national development, is taking place in our central universities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

9. Our central universities are the pride of our higher education system. They have contributed immensely to nation building and continue to do so. The goal of our central universities should be to constantly grow and upgrade themselves as per the best of global standards. It is here that all of you as Vice-Chancellors have to provide leadership.
10. As an immediate goal you should strive to become the best in the country and compete with each other in a healthy way. Thereafter, work towards competing with the world's best. Our central universities should be nurture and provide researchers and students every opportunity to excel in their research work and academic projects.
11. Universities are public institutions powered with the energy and dynamism of our youth. You must use this energy to engage with the communities near to your campuses as also with the government of the state that hosts you. Encourage your students to take up socially oriented ventures through NSS or other clubs. Those universities which are located in backward regions have a special responsibility of working with communities around them. Incorporating community-oriented initiatives in your academic programs will further expand the horizon of your students and prepare them well for life ahead. You should also engage

purposefully with the respective state governments and its different institutions on projects of mutual interest.

12. Once again, I congratulate the winners of the Visitor's Awards 2018 and wish you all the best for your future endeavours. I also look forward to having meaningful deliberations with the Vice-Chancellors present here in the next session.

Thank you,
Jai Hind!