

CONCLUDING ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND AT THE NOBEL LAUREATES SEMINAR

Auditorium, Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre, February 5, 2018

1. I am happy to meet you again at the concluding event of what I understand has been a very productive and intellectually stimulating day. In my opening address this morning, I had referred to the ancient Indian tradition of science and scientific inquiry. Another ancient Indian tradition is that of samvaad or dialogue or conversation – a two-way interaction, rather than a one-sided lecture.
2. I am glad to know that in its structure, today's event was true to the concept of samvaad. A one-hour panel discussion among the Nobel Laureates and scientific administrators was followed by an hour of questions and answers. An hour where researchers, young scientists and some of the finest emerging minds of our country were able to engage directly with distinguished leaders in their field!
3. I must appreciate the Nobel Laureates who are here today for sparing the time to answer questions in such detail, and for agreeing to such a satisfying format. You have shared your knowledge and scholarship in a manner that has been inspiring. Your presence in India – and indeed the very fact that the Nobel Foundation and the Ministry of Science and Technology have come together for this interaction – is an indicator of how raising the bar for research and development and for innovation in India is a shared aspiration. Every Indian is thankful for such sincere and well-meaning friends.
4. Our aspirations are similar, and so is our roadmap. Some of the themes that emerged today would evoke hardly any differences. As was emphasised by one of the speakers, education is the base of the pyramid, the apex of which is scientific research. Without a strong, dynamic and creative education and schooling system, we cannot

create a research and innovation culture. It is important to cultivate curiosity in our classrooms, and free science from the tyranny of jargon.

5. To take this further, as was also said today, good researchers emerge in a system that values good teachers and good faculty. The linkage between research institutes and universities – and research and industry, I would add – is extremely important. These cannot exist in independent silos.
6. It is also critical to link science to society. One of the reasons for the wide-spread support for our space programme, for instance, has been the ability of India's space scientists to offer solutions to the lives of ordinary Indians – whether in mapping weather patterns that assist our farmers, or telemedicine that enhances access to healthcare.
7. Another point that was discussed was the need to develop leadership and administrative capacities – as well as public communication capacities – of our scientists. It takes great skill to lead a technically capable research team of 15 or 20 people. It takes great skill to communicate with such a team of qualified scientists. It takes related but different capacities to lead an institution of a few thousands. And it takes great patience for our learned scientists to explain the intricacies of science and technology to ordinary people. And yet, our scientists have to do this for the benefit of society. By communicating science, you will further the cause of science.
8. Today, we have seen a similar generosity of spirit here from our Nobel friends. I hope your visit to India has gone well, and I wish you and all the others here the very best for your future efforts. And I look forward to the delegation from the Nobel Foundation visiting our country again next year. I don't need to add that the doors of Rashtrapati Bhavan are always open to all of you.

Thank you
Jai Hind!