

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
ON THE OCCASION OF NATIONAL TECHNOLOGY DAY
CELEBRATIONS**

New Delhi, May 11, 2018

1. I am happy to be here for the 20th National Technology Day, which is the anniversary of a landmark moment for our country. It was on this day two decades ago that the Pokhran nuclear tests took place and demonstrated India's capacity as a nuclear weapons state as well as a mature and responsible technology power, capable of harnessing sensitive knowledge.
2. The Pokhran tests of May 1998 were a demonstration of both scientific capacity and political will. India's nuclear programme was built brick by brick in a period of technology denial. Yet, our scientists and our technologists persevered and took our country to greater heights. In 1998, the government of the day took the bold decision to go ahead with the tests – and reposition India on the global stage. Those tests had a far-reaching impact on how the world came to see India – and on our foreign policy, our strategic relations and eventually our international technological collaborations.
3. That is why today we remember my predecessor as President of India, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, who led the dedicated scientific team that made preparations for the Pokhran tests. We also remember the leadership and courage of our then Prime Minister, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
4. National Technology Day is much more than the anniversary of a historical event. Like technology itself, it is a pathway to the future. Today we celebrate the achievements of some of our best scientists and innovators, and their success in shaping technology into usable, commercial products and processes that change the lives of people. My congratulations to all those present here, and particularly to the Award winners!

5. The achievements that we have applauded today range from a vaccine that will help defeat rotavirus, which is a leading cause of diarrhoeal deaths among children, to a low-cost but high-performing diagnostic machine for kidney and other non-communicable illnesses. Among those who have won technology start-up awards, there are companies that have demonstrated advance in wireless communication, in drug delivery for cancer patients, and in medical tests that help fight the growing problem of antimicrobial resistance. We have also seen the launch of a charger for lithium ion batteries, and been introduced to a host of other technological innovations.
6. These new technologies have three attributes in common. First, they offer solutions that are necessary in the Indian context, and contribute to the social and economic needs of our people. Second, they achieve all this at competitive price points. Third, and this to my mind is the most critical, they don't compromise on quality.
7. This emphasis on quality in our innovation and technology endeavours is non-negotiable. There was a time when we tended to confuse frugal and low-cost innovation with jugaad – small, incremental change or essentially a cut-and-paste approach to technology. As a society, we have and we must continue to overcome that mindset. Today's award winners are examples of how we are moving ahead with daring, with risk-taking ability and with ingenuity – how we are making genuine leaps of imagination and of innovation. Beyond the products and processes, it is this new energy among our technology incubators that is refreshing.
8. After Independence, India began to climb the value chain in technology production in the areas of space and, as I mentioned earlier, atomic energy. Today, we have expanded to best-in-class capacities in communication technology, IT, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology. This has changed perceptions about our country and helped both our people and our economy. In the past year itself, we have had stand-out achievements such as the launch of

the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System - 1L. We are also making preparations for the Chandrayaan-2 mission to the moon. India has a formidable reputation in the drugs and vaccines value chain. And in the manufacture of medical devices and diagnostic machines, I am optimistic we will replicate our success in generic drugs.

9. Now we have to explore new frontiers. The government has proposed to establish Centres of Excellence to train young technologists in robotics, artificial intelligence, digital manufacture, Big Data Analytics, quantum communication, and in the Internet of Things. The government is also pursuing demonstration and deployment of successful technology solutions for clean energy options and for meeting the challenge of water availability. These are 21st century challenges – and they require 21st century answers. Such answers will be provided by our young technologists in this audience.

Ladies and Gentlemen

10. Technology and innovation have cross-cutting implications. All of our national programmes – such as Make in India, Skill India, Digital India, Start-up India, Stand-up India, Ayushman Bharat, enhancing agricultural productivity and farm incomes, and others – require a force multiplier in the form of technology. Our attempt to build affordable housing for all our people and to provide universal energy access calls for a force multiplier in the form of technology. Our effort to fight pollution, whether in the air of our cities or the water of our rivers, needs a force multiplier in the form of technology. Our goal is a technology society and our means to that goal too will incorporate technology. Technology is our destiny.
11. Technology is destiny, but technology must also be equity. Its fruits must be accessible to all. Finance and resources should be available to all technologists who may wish to turn entrepreneurs – and to migrate from the lab room to the shop floor. Above all, gender equity must be integrated with technology production and technology sharing. We need more of our

daughters and more of our country's young women to enter the technology and innovation space. Those who are already working here are doing a remarkable job, but their numbers need to improve. And improve urgently.

12. With those words, and with the confidence that the almost magical synthesis of curiosity and experiment, of science and innovation, and of technology and change, is set to revolutionise India, I wish you all the best for your future endeavours.

Thank you
Jai Hind!