

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
AT THE MEETING OF VICE-CHANCELLORS, DIRECTORS AND
HEADS OF VARIOUS CENTRAL INSTITUTES OF HIGHER
LEARNING**

Rashtrapati Bhavan, December 14, 2019

1. I must begin by thanking all of you for your concise but very educative presentations on diverse themes pertaining to your institutes. Promoting top-class research is paramount and so are innovation and entrepreneurship as well as industry – academia linkages. Apart from these we need to find ways to fill up vacancies, create and utilise alumni-based endowment funds and complete infrastructure projects. Each of these goals is extremely important and I am glad the deliberations focussed on these.
2. All of you represent Central Institutes that are special. These institutes promote technical education in diverse areas such as agriculture; pharmaceuticals; aviation; design; footwear-design; fashion; petroleum and energy; maritime studies; planning and architecture and information technology. What unites you all is the quest for excellence and the synergies possible when some of you explore to work together. The latter being one of the reasons for calling you here on a common platform. I will touch upon this issue later.
3. India has set itself for sustainable development as it strives to eliminate poverty and become a middle-income country. Each of your institutes will be instrumental to the realisation of our socio-economic goals. Take the National Institutes of Pharmaceutical Education and Research. India has a strong and vibrant pharmaceutical industry and a noteworthy record in producing generics. Yet, it is now time to take a quantum leap in this area. For instance, can we become leaders in drug

discovery, in developing of cutting-edge, patented medicines? Can we solve longstanding public health issues such as Diabetes, TB? The answers lie in incubating an entrepreneurial environment and that should be a vital for your institutes as well.

4. Likewise, the Central Agricultural Universities can support our national goal of promoting sustainable agriculture, productivity and supporting our farmers with useful research. The same is true of all your institutes linked to different areas be it aviation, oceanography, petroleum and energy, IT, Design, Architecture and others. Each of you is doing well but we need to raise the bar further. As our economy grows we need to acquire the scale and efficiency that is greater and better than the best in the world. Your institutes have the mandate to lead research, to provide skilled talent, to spur innovation and to set an agenda for sustainable and climate-friendly development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. I referred to the synergies possible when some of you decide to work together. While developing your specialisations, I would urge you to collaborate and learn from each other. This is possible for institutes in the same field. It is also possible across categories. For example, advances in Information Technology can aid Architects and town planners to design Smart Cities that minimise use of energy. All of you should set up systems that can scout for and support cross-category collaborations which might hold creative promises to solve many of our problems.
6. I do not wish to dwell in detail on the themes on which you made presentations. It is imperative to fill up vacancies. Wherever posts are yet to be created, it has to be done at the earliest. Infrastructure projects need to be completed; innovation and entrepreneurship needs to be supported. Also all of you must collaborate with the industry as well as your alumni in creative ways. IIT Delhi has made a presentation on their alumni endowment fund today. I urge all of you to take a

similar step and chalk up strategies for involving alumni. I hope to hear from more of you when we meet next year on your initiatives.

Ladies and Gentlemen

7. Great institutes of learning are different due to the leadership they nurture and build. You as the heads of leading higher education institutes must discharge your key role as leadership mentors for the next generation of academic-administrators. This would ensure that we have a ready talent pool of directors, deans and administrators who can conceive, establish and administer our institutes of higher education.
8. Today, we have discussed some challenges and also made some progress in identifying the way forward. The Ministers in charge of the institutes here today have a big role in providing the vision for your institutes. They are the people who can ensure that the goals of your institutes are aligned with the aspirations and hopes of the people of this country. I am sure the heads of the institutes will seek their guidance as they chart their growth stories. I am also sure that the Secretaries of various Departments are now better apprised of the issues faced by your institutes and would work with you to address them with a renewed sense of urgency.
9. I thank you all for coming to Rashtrapati Bhavan for this very educative meeting and participating in the discussions. I am happy to see that all of you are so committed to your institutes and to take them to the next level of excellence. I wish you and your institutes – all the best for the future.

Thank you,
Jai Hind!