

**ADDRESS OF PRESIDENT OF INDIA,  
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND  
AT TENTH FOUNDATION DAY AND SEVENTH CONVOCATION  
CEREMONY OF INSTITUTE OF LIVER AND BILIARY SCIENCES (ILBS)**

**New Delhi, January 15, 2020**

1. I am delighted to be present amongst all of you today on the occasion of the Tenth Foundation Day of the Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS) and the Seventh Convocation Ceremony of the Institute. The day becomes even more special as it coincides with all of us celebrating Makar Sankranti today. My best wishes to all of you on this day. It appears that ILBS has a divine association with Makar Sankranti. I am told that ten years ago too, it was on Makar Sankranti, that this institute was born and since then it has grown from strength to strength.
2. I am pleased to know that in a short span of ten years, ILBS has made a stellar contribution in the field of liver and biliary diseases and has earned immense appreciation for its academic excellence. It has served people in need with state-of-the-art patient care services at an affordable cost. I congratulate all members of the ILBS family, both past and present, whose dedication and commitment lies behind the Institute's success.
3. Ten years in the life of an institute is an apt occasion to reflect upon its successes as well as its present and future challenges. There is no doubt that ILBS has lived upto its vision to be a centre of excellence for diagnosis, cure and prevention of liver and biliary diseases. Since inception, ILBS has served over seven lakh patients and set benchmarks for evidence and protocol based treatments. As we just heard from the Director, ILBS has laudable

achievements making it a top-class institute in the field of Liver and Biliary Sciences.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

4. There are still numerous health challenges before us all, including those related to Liver diseases. In India, we need about two lakh liver transplants a year, while only a few thousand are done every year. There is need to establish liver transplant programs in more public hospitals and ILBS can provide necessary expertise in this regard. But perhaps most crucial is to encourage organ donation and spread awareness about it. There is a huge gap between the requirement and availability of organs needed for saving lives. Organ donors give a new lease of life to fellow human beings and in a way they continue to live even after their death.
5. The dearth of donors results mainly from lack of awareness about organ donation. I urge ILBS to prepare a roadmap suggesting ways and means to encourage Liver donation, to improve the related procedures and protocols, and to strengthen the infrastructure needed to support a higher number of Liver transplants than is currently possible. Once prepared, the roadmap can be shared with different stakeholders.
6. The growing incidence of Liver diseases is also linked to our unhealthy lifestyles. I am told that, at present, nearly one out of four Indians have fatty liver and may be ten per cent of them have liver diseases due to excessive body fat. This condition is known to be a precursor to development of diabetes and heart disease. And diabetics have greater incidence of liver disease than others. It is for institutes like ILBS to take up research that can clarify the linkages between our lifestyle and liver diseases. That would help in developing a preventive care system based in lifestyle changes.

7. There is no substitute for each of us taking more responsibility for our health and that of our children. We should try to make yoga, physical exercises, sports and meditation an integral part of our daily routine. I often hear people complaining that children nowadays remain glued to their TV screens, tablets and mobile devices rather than playing outdoor sports. It is for us to counsel them on the adverse effects of long exposure to digital screens and motivate them to take the playing fields.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

8. Health remains a key development challenge for India. Our Government remains committed to tackle these through the flagship Ayushman Bharat programme and other health missions. To me, the most crucial element in addressing our health challenges is our medical fraternity. Doctors and other medical professionals are the backbone of a robust health infrastructure and you have the onerous task of updating your own knowledge and skills all the time.
9. In this context, on the occasion of the Institute's Seventh Convocation, let me congratulate all the specialists, who have completed their courses here at ILBS in the niche area of liver disease. Your success is a result of your hard work, as well as the efforts of your professors and the sacrifices of your families. With your specialized knowledge, you now have an even greater power to help those in need. And for you, there cannot be a better example of service than the late Dr. A P J Abdul Kalam, former President of India, who was the first Chancellor of this institute where you have been trained.
10. Through your education at ILBS, you have enhanced your capabilities to serve fellow human beings. It is true that you need to be legitimately rewarded for your academic excellence, your

medical skills and your expertise. Yet, your services must be available both to those who can afford your fees and also to those who are less fortunate and cannot afford. I am sure each one of you will find your own ways to make this possible.

11. I compliment the Director, Dr. S. K. Sarin, his entire team, students and all others who have been associated with ILBS in past, for the Institute's glorious journey of ten years. I am sure the Institute shall continue its excellent work in delivering quality public health services. I wish the Institute and all of you the very best for your future endeavours.

Thank you.

Jai Hind!