

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
ON THE OCCASION OF PRESENTATION OF THE 5TH VISITOR'S
AWARD AND MEET OF VICE-CHANCELLORS OF CENTRAL
UNIVERSITIES**

Rashtrapati Bhavan, December 17, 2019

1. I welcome you all to Rashtrapati Bhavan for the 5th Visitor's Awards and the Meet of the Vice-Chancellors of Central Universities, Directors of IISERs and Indian Institute of Science Bengaluru.
2. At the outset, I wish to congratulate all the winners of the Visitor's Award for this year. I am told that the number of applications received was more than double that of last year. You have been chosen through a very tough selection process and have emerged deserving winners. I must also congratulate the selection committee for their efforts. As we have been informed, the entire application process and the evaluation of applications was simplified and made entirely online. This is a welcome step and I hope to see the popularity of these awards grow even more. I am also happy to note that some of the spouses of the award winners are here today. It is important to appreciate their contribution as sources of inspiration and strength.

Ladies and gentlemen,

3. Today, we have recognized eminent researchers in science, humanities and technology. It is knowledge that will allow us to find solutions to the problems we face in our world, nation and society. Research and innovation hold the key to lifting our people out of poverty, ensuring their health and well-being or attaining food and energy security.
4. The job of a professional researcher is not a regular one, and neither is it an easy one. It is sometimes not understood that research calls for untiring determination from the researcher as well as full institutional support. In this backdrop, I wish to

acknowledge the specific contribution of the winners of the Visitor's Awards, 2019.

5. Prof. Sibnath Deb has worked in the field of health psychology with focus on child protection and clinical psychology. Prof. Sanjay Puri has made important contribution to the field of non-equilibrium statistical physics. In the field of biological sciences, the work of both Prof. Asad Ullah Khan and Dr Partima Solanki has been recognized today for its positive healthcare applications. Dr Shaon Ray Chaudhuri has worked on developing technology to convert dairy waste-water into bio-fertilizer. Your work has the potential to address many of our challenges and is worthy contribution towards national development. These Awards recognize your outstanding contribution, single-minded devotion and painstaking work in the pursuit of knowledge. All of you are true achievers and I am sure that your success will inspire other researchers to take up meaningful projects in their respective fields.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

6. The Universities and institutions you represent are the pride of our higher education system. Yet you have little time to rest on your laurels. 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 and Directors have to provide leadership. As an immediate goal you should strive to become the best in the country and compete with each other in a healthy way. Thereafter, you must aspire to compete with the best in the world. But to achieve the levels where you can compete, it is crucial that you collaborate amongst yourselves, other state and private universities and learn from the experiences of each other.
7. As leaders of universities and institutions, all of you are also mandated to develop leadership qualities in your students. Beyond classrooms and labs, students should be encouraged 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. You cannot also ignore the industry. Developing meaningful linkages

between the academic community and local industry should be a top priority. Students must be encouraged to emerge as job-creators rather than job-seekers. In this context, I am delighted that the UGC and Ministry of Human Resources Development have come out with a handbook for Vice Chancellors on governance issues in higher education. I hope that all of you are able to make good use of this handbook and benefit from the guidance contained in it. I compliment the team behind the publication of this handbook for their hard work and determination. I look forward to seeing this handbook in the hands and offices of not only every Vice Chancellor and but also all aspiring Vice Chancellors!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

8. Once again, I congratulate the winners of the Visitor's Awards 2019 and wish you all the best for your future endeavors. It is my suggestion that all the past and current awardees should be brought together on a digital platform so that they can share notes and research ideas. I look forward to having fruitful deliberations in the upcoming sessions.

Thank you,
Jai Hind!