

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
ON THE OCCASION OF DEDICATION OF VARIOUS PROJECTS OF
THE ANDHRA PRADESH GOVERNMENT**

Velagapudi, December 27, 2017

1. I am happy to be here to dedicate to the people of Andhra Pradesh four connected but different projects of the state government. These are pioneering projects in our country. They are aimed at leveraging technology to improve governance and enhance the lives of citizens. The four projects are:
 - I. Andhra Pradesh Fibregrid
 - II. Andhra Pradesh Surveillance Project
 - III. Drone Project; and
 - IV. Free Space Optical Communication or FSOC system

2. I congratulate the state government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Shri N. Chandrababu Naidu, for both planning and executing these ambitious projects. The state has lived up to its well-deserved reputation of being an innovator in technology adoption.

3. **Andhra Pradesh Fibregrid** aims to provide **data connectivity at high speeds** to households and businesses across the state. It uses the aerial route to deploy optical fibre, taking advantage of existing electricity poles. In this way, it removes the need to lay underground fibre – which is both expensive and cumbersome because of right-of-way issues.

4. I have been told that **Andhra Pradesh State FiberNet Limited**, created as the nodal agency for this project, has promised broadband speeds of 15 to 20 Mbps for households and up to 1 Gbps for commercial institutions by 2018. I am also given to understand that nearly 24,000 km of aerial optical fibre cable is already in place across 13 districts. Households will have access to the Internet, television channels, a telephone and related services for a monthly fee of only Rs 149.

5. This is extremely impressive and will go a long way in realising the dreams of **Digital AP**, within the wider framework of **Digital India**. And of course of the government of India's **Bharat Net** project that is taking broadband connectivity to virtually every gram panchayat.
6. From an expensive luxury even a decade ago, **data** and **Internet access** is today seen as a utility – as much a basic need as water, electricity and cooking gas. We are moving towards a **plug-and-play** system where it will be the norm for houses and office spaces to come pre-configured with broadband connectivity. Andhra Pradesh is attempting to realise that potential. In a sense, it has understood the future.
7. Access to the Internet has multiple benefits. Common citizens are finding uses for and benefits from data access that we could not have imagined. Farmers and small producers in rural areas use Internet connectivity to contact buyers in distant locations and make themselves aware of the real value of their products. Similarly digital classrooms and telemedicine can help our people leapfrog traditional handicaps. They can expand the circle of knowledge as well as make quality healthcare and diagnosis available even in distant places. That is why data connectivity is such a tool of human empowerment and of social change.
8. Here too I would like to commend the Andhra Pradesh government's **Cloud Based Virtual Classroom System** project. It will level the field between better-off children in big cities and talented children in rural areas who simply don't have the physical advantages that their urban peers have.

Ladies and Gentlemen

9. I am happy to learn that the state government is planning to use **drones** for providing **Real Time Information for Governance**. This will have multiple benefits – in security and policing, mining, urban development, raising agricultural productivity, measuring forest cover, anticipating natural and other disasters and so on. Again, this is a model for other states to follow.

10. Such integration of technology with the entire range of government responsibilities is worthy of appreciation. We are moving towards a paradigm where technology is not just an optional add-on to governance – but more or less drives modern governance. In a 24/7 hyper-connected world, governments and administrations cannot afford to be reactive; they have to be online, on time and on the ball. Technology is the enabler that allows this.
11. I am particularly interested to know more about the Andhra Pradesh **Real Time Governance Centre**, on which I will be receiving a briefing very shortly. I have been told the Andhra Pradesh government centre is the biggest such in Asia and is virtually a state secretariat in cyber-space, providing several services to citizens.
12. All this is only an appetiser. When the state capital of **Amravati** is fully constructed, it is expected to be the most technologically compatible city in India. If I could put it so, it is expected to be India's leading **techno-polis**. And the projects I am opening today are a build up to what Amravati and **New Andhra Pradesh** will represent. The Andhra people and the people of India are looking forward to that. After all, they have come to expect nothing but a quest for excellence from Chief Minister Shri Chandrababu Naidu!
13. I wish him and his government, and I wish the people of Andhra Pradesh, the very best for a bright and sunny future. And I wish all of you a happy and prosperous New Year!

Thank you
Jai Hind!