

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
AT THE 51ST CONVOCATION OF IIT, KANPUR**

Kanpur, June 28, 2018

1. It is a moment of happiness for me to be here for the 51st convocation of the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur. I consider it a privilege to be addressing some of the brightest young minds in the country and in fact the world. IIT Kanpur sets the benchmark for education in engineering and technology, in the sciences, and even in humanities, management and allied disciplines.
2. Starting with the first batch of just 100 students in 1960, the Institute has come a long way. Today, it has 6,500 students. Its 35,000 alumni comprise engineers, entrepreneurs and technologists who have helped build India. They have also added to our country's global reputation. IIT Kanpur alumni can be found from Silicon Valley to Singapore. They have contributed substantially to research and business across the world. And yet their primary identity remains their alma mater. Many educational institutions are known by their alumni. In the case of your Institute, old students are known by virtue of being from IIT Kanpur.
3. The evolution of IIT Kanpur has mirrored scientific and technological education in independent India. The IIT Kanpur model forms the core of the engineering curriculum in premier institutions of the country. Way back in 1963, IIT Kanpur was a pioneer in offering programmes in computer science. This anticipated the IT revolution in the country by a good three decades. Such achievements have been possible due to the commitment and dedication of several generations of faculty members and students. I congratulate all those who have been part of this journey.

4. The students graduating today are drawing from this great legacy. This is a day of celebration for you and I wish you a satisfying future. It is also a day of fulfilment for your professors, parents, family members and all those who have helped you navigate the process of acquiring your degree. I am confident you will prove worthy of the trust that your teachers and family members have reposed in you. Please strive and live up to the support that other stakeholders, from the government to tax payers to civil society, have given you and given IIT Kanpur. As and when you can, and in a manner of your choosing, you must return this debt to society.

Ladies and Gentlemen and Dear Students

5. Those who are graduating today are doing so at a juncture marked by excitement and opportunities. Today's India offers unprecedented hope and avenues. Your professional future may well lie in aerospace engineering, Artificial Intelligence, biomedical research, energy storage, smart grids, renewable energy, financial mathematics, precision manufacture or so many other fields. Our fast-growing economy offers you huge scope. With your talent, your education and your IIT degree, each of you can be a game changer for India.
6. To improve the quality of life of our fellow citizens, the Government of India has undertaken many initiatives. Among others these include the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation or AMRUT, the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojna, Digital India, Make in India, Start-up India, and the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. Technology can be a force multiplier for all these programmes. As you build your careers, please attempt to contribute to such national missions.
7. Every educational institution and every educated individual exists in a social context. Kanpur, the urban centre your IIT belongs to, has an illustrious history. Like you, I too was fortunate to be a college student in this city. In the 20th century, Kanpur was one of the earliest industrial townships in our country and its textile mills won it the nickname "Manchester of the East". In the age of the digital economy and of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, it is

important to upgrade and re-imagine Kanpur as an industrial and commercial hub. The city is also critical to the success of Namami Gange. This is a programme to not merely de-pollute the Ganga and conserve it from industrial effluents. It goes further. It seeks to rationalise the allocation and usage of the river's waters as well as to develop the Ganga basin.

8. All of these are shared tasks. Governments and citizens, industry and academia – a variety of stakeholders will play a role. IIT Kanpur too must be part of the mix. It is necessary for scientific and research institutions such as this one to assume a larger responsibility in programme design, monitoring and implementation strategies for the renewal of Kanpur.

Dear Graduating Students

9. You represent an extraordinary generation in our country's history. Your generation faces extraordinary challenges. But it also has extraordinary opportunities and is equipped with extraordinary skills and scholarship to meet and defeat those challenges.
10. As you go into the world outside, a world buzzing with energy and passion, I would like to leave you with four mantras.
11. First, Get Inspired: To achieve big things it is important to understand the lives and motivations of those before you who have done big things. What abilities made them special? What can you learn from their experiences, both their successes and their failures? Sometimes the answers to these questions are an education in themselves.
12. Second, Think Big, Think Risks: Do not be afraid of failure. Ordinary goals are for ordinary people. For you, the cream of our educational system and of our youth, it is crucial to set yourselves significant and nontrivial goals. Whether in a research lab, a start-up, a business corporation or a government institution, please imbibe a risk-taking culture. Yes, there will be setbacks – but pick yourselves up and learn from them. Great societies and great nations are not built by an over-cautious and risk-averse attitude.

13. Third, Maintain Discipline: To accomplish whatever mission you set yourself, it is essential that you do not compromise with discipline. Clearly understand the boundaries of your personal and professional lives. Devote yourselves to work, but keep time for physical exercise, for music and hobbies, and above all for your families and friends.
14. And fourth, Be Humble and Sensitive: Do not get carried away by your success as it may distract you from new frontiers. Always remember that whatever knowledge you may have acquired, at the end of the day it amounts to a few drops in the ocean of human experience. Carry your learning and your achievements lightly, and use them for the welfare of our country and of humanity.
15. With those words, I wish you the best possible future. And I wish the IIT Kanpur community a continued march towards even greater excellence.

Thank you
Jai Hind!