



# Speech by the President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee at the Dedicating BML Munjal University to the Nation RBCC: July 12, 2017 (1800-1845 hours)

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1. I am happy to dedicate BML Munjal University to the nation. It is one of the new universities in the region which has the potential to turn itself into a leading institution in the times to come.

2. This university was set up to recognize and celebrate the life of Shri Brij Mohal Lall Munjal, one of the most respected industrialists of our nation and the founder of the Hero Group. Shri Munjal never went to college; yet, he taught many people to think for themselves. Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan once observed and I quote: "The true teachers are the ones who help us think for ourselves" (unquote). The University of Life had taught Munjalji so much that he went on to build an eco-system that impacted millions of lives, besides nurturing successful businesses. He set up several leading schools, colleges and institutions that are now shining examples of what he stood for.

Ladies and gentlemen:

3. I have had the occasion to meet Munjalji several times. I have always been amazed at how he carried so much on his shoulders so lightly. The manner in which he lived his life, and built his business and social enterprises, holds a great lesson for those who are in public life as well as in business. And that lesson is: how much it is possible to achieve success with dignity, grace and humility. I am delighted to see that the legacy he created, along with his brothers, is being continued and strengthened by the next generation of the Munjal family in different ways.

4. One of the things Munjalji discovered from his own life experience was the importance of learning skills and the value of being practical. He believed that life's education and learning occurred both within and outside the walls of the classroom. True to this philosophy, this university has been modeled on the principle of practicality, which is unique in India's higher education landscape today. I hope that such an effort is emulated by others venturing into this noble field.

Friends:

5. I am told that BML Munjal University offers complete campus education. To my mind, campuses serve as an important venue for the transition from adolescence to adulthood. It is a critical phase in the life of the youth when their minds are willing to experiment and think of novel things.

6. In the emerging global scenario, the quality of higher education imparted will play an important role in moulding the careers of young men and women. In less than ten years from now, nearly 140 million people will be in the college-going age group. Every fourth graduate in the world will be a product of our higher education system. In such a competitive environment, only those professionals who are properly skilled and trained will achieve success. The onus is on the higher educational institutions to prepare their students in a way that they are globally relevant and yet sensitive to the needs of the local socio-economy.

Ladies and gentlemen:

7. One of my distinguished predecessors, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, had placed great emphasis on skills. He suggested that two certificates should be given to the students; one, a skill certificate and the general education certificate. The government has been taking several initiatives to make education in India more skill-centric.

8. Higher educational institutions also have a great responsibility in modernizing education. Technology and communication are fast transforming the way the world works. Institutions must catch up with the latest technology to make education more effective and meaningful. They have to reorganize courses, programs and structures to meet the needs of a changing era and suit the aspirations of students.

9. Students have to be versed in original analytical thinking, communication skills, superior presentation skills and ability to work in teams. This can only happen when the top-down approach to education changes. Rather than the teacher serving as the only source of knowledge dispensation in a classroom, he or she must encourage information sharing between students. Peer-to-peer learning has the potential to unearth and create new knowledge.

Ladies and gentlemen:

10. Those students who are entering the workforce must be self-managing, self-developing and emotionally self-sustaining. These are qualities that must be ingrained in students when they enter an institute of higher learning. Students cannot sit and be passive recipients any longer. Curriculum must not be pre-designed. Rather, it must undergo continuous revision to make it increasingly contemporary. The dominant mode of instruction can no longer be text-book and lecture-centric.

11. In today's world, continuing with the twentieth century template for education can be risky. With a rise in online learning,

world class content and courses from the finest universities are now being made available through knowledge networks. MOOCs have become an important component of learning in conventional education system due to the changing profile of learners. There are many who are seeking education from their work places in line with the philosophy of lifelong learning. Online learning allows the learning experience to be tailored to individual style or pace. Tricky concepts can be relearned through programs online or processed through a variety of formats. With this flexibility, students are better prepared to take their learning in stride.

Friends:

12. It is clearly important for contemporary higher education institutions to offer an extra edge, in terms of a more interactive and unique learning experience. Making more optimal use of classroom time holds the key. Many are moving from the traditional lecture style towards a discussion-based seminar approach. Others are adopting the concept of 'flipped classroom' (A strategy of blended learning that reverses the traditional learning mode by delivering content outside the classroom, often through online communication channels).

Ladies and gentlemen:

13. It is not enough for higher education institutions to be modern and relevant. They must be designed to serve and make an impact on society. Their research capability must be used with an aim to innovatively address real world problems that nations face. Higher educational institutions must strive to become community assets. It is heartening to learn that this university is doing some pioneering work in both the areas of education formats as well as sustainable research and innovation. I am told that about 45 percent of the students' time is spent outside the classroom, where learning takes place through projects, workshops, labs, industry visits and practice school. In these endeavours, students should work in teams to identify problems and think through solutions.

14. Accrual of knowledge in renowned institutions takes place through collaborative partnerships with such other institutions as well as industrial organizations. I am glad that BML University has tie-ups with some of the world's leading institutions like Imperial College, London, Singapore Management University and the University of Maryland as well as corporations such as IBM, KPMG, Intel, Shell, Siemens and Axis Bank. I hope that this momentum is not only maintained but strengthened further. Albert Einstein had once said (and I quote): "I never teach my pupils. I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn" (unquote). BML University provides a fine learning environment, and as the saying goes, the mind grows by what it feeds on.

15. Before I conclude, I would like to compliment the leadership, faculty and students of BML Munjal University for their achievements in a short span of time. Wishing you all the very best for your journey towards excellence and in that process you may contribute to building up of your institution and the nation.

Thank you.  
Jai Hind.

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