



English rendering of PM's address at the centenary celebrations of Patna University

Posted On: 14 OCT 2017 5:35PM by PIB Delhi

All the youngsters present here in large numbers,

Our chief minister was telling me that I am the first Prime Minister ever to visit the Patna University for a programme. I am privileged that my predecessors have left some good work to be accomplished by me. Hence, I have got the opportunity to do this good work.

First of all I would like to salute this sacred soil because this University Campus has played a major role in contributing to the country's development. There is a famous Chinese saying: if your vision is for a year then sow food grains; if your vision is for 10-20 years then sow fruit-bearing trees; but if your vision is for next generations then you should go for producing good human beings. Patna University exemplifies this saying. After the seed was sown hundred years ago, within hundred years several generations came and studied in the University; some of them became politicians and started serving several areas after passing out. Today I realise that there might not be any state in the country where the top five civil servants are not from Bihar's Patna University.

I generally meet officials from different states of India. Daily I talk to about 80 or 100 people for about 2 hours and I realise that the greater chunk of those officials are from Bihar. They are blessed by Goddess Saraswati. But the time has changed. Bihar has the blessings of Goddess Saraswati. But Bihar also needs the blessings of Goddess Lakshmi. The government of India intends to take Bihar to new heights with the blessings of both the Goddesses.

Nitish ji is committed towards the development of Bihar and the Government of India is also committed towards the development of Eastern India. Our resolution should be to elevate Bihar to the position of other developed States of India by 2022 when the country will celebrate 75 years of Independence.

The city of Patna is situated at the banks of mother Ganga. The knowledge and heritage of Bihar is as old as the river Ganga. No one can forget Nalanda or Vikramshila while referring to India's history of education.

Probably there is hardly any area which remains untouched by this soil's contribution in reforming human lives. The legacy of this great heritage is in itself a great source of inspiration. Those who can recall the rich history are capable of conveying it to the future generations and those who forget remain barren. Therefore its creation is powerful. Its conception is also possible on this soil which has the power to enlighten this earth because it has a great historical Heritage, cultural heritage and a living example. I believe that there is no such power or capability anywhere else.

There was a time when we used to go to schools and colleges to learn but that era has ended. Today the world is transforming, the ideas are changing and with technological intervention even the way of life is changing. In view of this fact, the students are also facing great challenges. The challenge is not about what new to learn but how to unlearn or de-learn the out-dated things and then re-learn the new things.

Once, Mr Forbes of the Forbes magazine had given an interesting definition. He had said that the purpose of knowledge is to empty the brain, to fill our minds with new thoughts and to do new things. He said that knowledge should empty the brain and broaden the thoughts. Our thinking has been to burden the brain; to cram things. If we want to bring a change in the true sense, then all of us have to start a campaign to broaden the mind-set so that new ideas can enter into our minds. Therefore the universities should provide learning and not teaching. How to take our educational institutions in that direction?

There is a consistency in one aspect over the years of evolution of the human culture and that is innovation. In every era human beings have added some innovation to their lifestyle. Today innovation is going through a period of competition. Only that country can progress in the World that prioritizes innovation and institutions. But a mere cosmetic change to the institution cannot be considered as modification. The need of the hour is to get rid of old and out-dated thoughts and to find new ways for securing the future and to arrange for resources in order to improve the lifestyle with the help of principles of science and technology. Today every sector needs to be reformed with the help of technology and the society also needs innovative ways for its progress. And so the universities can play a significant role in order to meet the needs of the future generation at a time when the competition has become globalised. Today we are not competing within our country or with our neighbouring countries only. The competition has also been globalised. So we have to accept that competition as a challenge. If the country wants to progress, take on new heights and secure our place in the global arena, then a great emphasize should be on innovation by our younger generation.

The perception of the world about India started changing only after the IT revolution swept the country. Before that the world used to conceive India as the land of snake charmers. The world used to associate Indians with black magic, ghosts and superstitions. But after the IT revolution the world was astonished to see the technological soundness of the younger generation. When the 18 to 20 year-olds of India started showing their IT prowess, the world was startled. Their perception about India changed.

I clearly remember my visit to Taiwan a long time ago. At that time I was not even the chief minister and had no links with elections. I had gone there on the Taiwan government's invitation. That was a 10-days trip. There was an interpreter with me to help me with conversation. In those 10 days we developed a little friendship. After 6 or 8 days he asked me whether I would mind if he enquired something. I told him to go ahead. But he was quite hesitant and could not ask me. Later, while travelling I asked him what was that he wanted to ask me that day. He was again hesitant. I told him that it was okay and he could ask me frankly. He was a computer engineer. Then he asked that whether India was still the same, the land of snake charmers, black magic and superstitions. He kept staring at me. I asked him what he felt after looking at me. He felt embarrassed and started apologizing. I said, "No brother, today India is not the same and in fact there has been a valuation!". He asked - "how?" I said that our ancestors used to play with Snakes and our present generation plays with a mouse! He understood that the mouse I was talking about was not the animal but the one used in the computers.

What I mean to say is that these things enhance the strength of the country. Sometimes we achieve awards by making one or two projects but the need of the hour is innovation at a mass scale. I want to appeal to the youngsters, students, faculties and universities from the sacred soil of the hundred year old Patna University to come forward with innovative ways to address the challenges faced by present day India. Can we find suitable technologies that are affordable, cheap, simple and user-friendly? If we encourage such small projects then these can convert into start-ups. The youngsters can develop the start-ups for innovating university education by the use of funds from banks under Mudra Yojana. Can you imagine that today India is the fourth largest start-up hub in the world? India can also achieve the top rank. If every youngster in India has a new idea for a Start-up then it can result in a revolutionary change. Hence I invite the universities of India, especially the University of Patna to promote innovation. We need to move ahead in this world.

India does not lack talent. India is fortunate to have 800million or 65 per cent of the country's population below 35 years of age. India is young and India's dreams are also young. I believe that the country that possesses such strength can achieve anything and can also fulfil all its dreams.

And so, right now Nitish ji placed a subject in great detail and you all supported it by your clapping. But I feel that central university is a matter of past. I want to take it one step ahead and so today I have come here for today's University programme to invite you all for the same. The reforms in the education sector in our country are progressing at a very slow pace. The mutual differences in our Academics are very intense. So, at every stage greater number of problems is arising rather than the reforms. The innovations and the reforms, that are needed in our education system especially in a higher

education system in order to reach the world class level, are somewhat lacking. This government has taken some bold steps. A debate has been going on for quite some time regarding the autonomy of IIMs. The government felt that it used to provide a lot of funds to these institutions but the Institutions did not take any directions from the government. You will be happy to know that after a couple of years of this debate, for the first time IIM was made completely Independent and was professionally opened-up. However most of these newspapers did not cover it extensively but a few articles were definitely written regarding this. It was a big decision. Just like the Patna University is well known for creating IAS, IPS and IFS, similarly the IIMs across the country are known for creating CEOs. So, we decided to free the prestigious Institute of government rules and restrictions. I believe that now that the IIMs have been provided with this opportunity, it will strive towards fulfilling the aspirations and hopes of the country. I have requested the IIMs to also ensure the participation of its alumni in governing them. I also heard the Patna University to involve its rich and capable alumni in the path of the development of the university. You must have seen that the alumni of all the top universities of the world have played a significant role in the universities progress, not only in monetary terms but also the intellect, experience, status and position. We generally invite the alumni to some functions; honour them with garlands; get donations from them and the association ends there. The alumni are a great strength in themselves. So their association with the university should be more than a mere tokenism.

A short while ago I was talking about going one step ahead than making it a Central University and that I have come to the Patna University to invite it for the same. The Government of India has presented a dream before the universities of the country. Indian universities have not found any place among the world's top 500. Isn't it ironical that the country where its universities like Nalanda, Vikramshila, Taxila, Vallabhi had attracted the entire world about 1300 or 1500 years back did not find any place among the top 500 universities of the world? Don't you think that we should erase this slur and change the situation? We only have to change the situation and not an outsider. We should take this resolution and strive towards its accomplishment.

In order to achieve that, the government of India through its scheme wants to make 10 public Universities and 10 private universities, total 20 universities, as world class by freeing them of the government rules and regulations. These universities will be provided with 10,000 crore rupees over 5 years. This initiative is much more than declaring a university as a central university. These universities will not be selected on the whims of any politician or the Prime Minister or any Chief Minister but by an open competition. All the universities are invited for this challenge. The universities have to prove their capability through this challenge. In this way top 10 private and 10 public universities will be selected. The final selection will be done through a third party professional agency. The state governments and the universities will be responsible for this challenge group. Their performance will be assessed. Their road maps on the international platform will also be assessed and the top 10 universities will be freed of the government hold and will be granted autonomy. They will be free to decide their road maps. These universities will be provided 10,000 crore rupees within 5 years. This concept is several steps ahead of the concept of Central University. This is a big decision and Patna should not be left behind. Therefore, I have come here to invite Patna University. I request the university and its faculties to come forward and participate in this important scheme. I wish that this glorious Patna University may curve a niche in the world arena. I solicit your cooperation in taking Patna University ahead. My best wishes to you all.

You should fulfil all the resolutions you have made in this centenary celebration. With these feelings, I thank you all.

AKT/AK/IG/MG/AK

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