



Address by the President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee on the occasion of National Technology Day Vigyan Bhavan: May 11, 2017

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1. I am indeed very happy to be present amidst you this afternoon for the nineteenth National Technology Day function being organized by the Ministry of Science and Technology. When we celebrate Technology Day, it is not only to commemorate the spectacular technological achievements of our nation. It is also to encourage the upcoming innovators and entrepreneurs, whose efforts are helping in percolating the benefits of science and technology to the society at large and the common man in particular.
2. Scientific and technological developments are a key to any nation's success. India is one of the top-ranking countries in the field of basic research. Indian science has progressed to become one of the most powerful instruments of knowledge. Yet in the wake of new demands of economic growth, it is necessary to embark on translating science and technology into developmental needs in all sectors such as infrastructure, agriculture, health, communication and education.
3. I am proud to state that our nation has been making rapid strides. Last year, we witnessed a number of remarkable achievements in the field of science and technology. It was a proud moment for every Indian when ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle successfully launched 104 satellites into the orbit, marking the thirty-eighth consecutive successful mission of PSLV. India's first Light Combat Aircraft *Tejas* was inducted into the Indian Air Force, marking the culmination of many years of painstaking research and hard work. Successful test firings of Medium and Long Range Surface to Air Missiles, which have been developed by DRDO in collaboration with Israel, were conducted. Maiden test flight of the **Rustom-II Unmanned Aerial Vehicle** was also successfully carried out by DRDO.

Ladies and gentlemen:

4. While we applaud these significant achievements, we must also contemplate on whether the technological developments have been limited to only a few sectors. Our pursuits in science and technology have to be more inclusive and encompassing, improving the lives of our vast population. In building such a scenario, the Department of Science and Technology (DST) plays a pivotal role. It promotes new areas of scientific development and supports the entire eco-system, from seeding and capacity building in cutting-edge research to translational research. DST works deep in technology development and deployment; innovations and start-ups; and international collaborations. This, they do so, by supporting infrastructure, scientists and students in academic and R&D institutions across the country. DST has established strategically important systems and mechanisms to foster excellence and leadership in scientific R&D, aligned with India's developmental aspirations.
5. It is heartening to know that DST's initiatives like "National Initiative for Developing and Harnessing Innovation", called NIDHI, is aimed at building an innovation-driven entrepreneurial eco-system for wealth and job creation. The INSPIRE programme, or "Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research", tap students early in life and nurture them to take up science and pursue careers in research. "Scholarship for Higher Education", or SHE, encourage students to undertake higher studies in science-intensive programmes by providing scholarships and mentoring through summer attachment. "Knowledge Involvement in Research Advancement through Nurturing" called KIRAN empower women scientists who had a break in their career. I compliment DST for its efforts towards encouraging S&T as a mission and career in the country.
6. Technology Development Board, which is the commercial wing of DST, is playing a stellar role in the development and commercialization of indigenous and imported technologies. In its twenty years of existence, the Board has vigorously pursued its mandate of providing financial assistance to Indian companies. In that respect, its role is aligned to the "Make in India" initiative of the government. Some projects of TDB have had a global impact especially in the pharmaceuticals and vaccines domain. Due to its efforts, India has emerged as a global supplier of childhood vaccines to UNICEF and World Health Organization.

Ladies and gentlemen:

7. Disparity between haves and have-nots, urban and rural areas, and exclusion or marginalization of certain groups can give rise to social unrest. It is crucial that more technological innovations are geared towards eliminating these disparities and differences. In our endeavor for global excellence, not even a single citizen should be left behind. 'Technology for sustainable and inclusive growth' is the need of the hour. And it is where you all - innovators, technocrats, entrepreneurs and policymakers - have an important role to play. You have to ensure that science and technology does not remain confined to a select few sectors only. Progress and growth of the country will be sustainable only if development for all is the overarching goal. For that, we have to ensure that all strata of the society enjoy the benefits of technological innovation and scientific advancements equally.
8. India is a land of rich diversity, with outstanding talent hidden away even in the remotest areas and minutest villages. Such potential needs to be discovered and nurtured. Our nation has been making steady progress towards increasing connectivity between far-flung regions and integrating people from all walks of life. It is essential that we continue to move forward in this direction and use technology to create stable employment opportunities, encourage entrepreneurship, and build growth models that allow for inclusion of women and the disadvantaged. This will lead to the empowerment of citizens, which is the hallmark of a strong nation.

Ladies and gentlemen:

9. The challenges facing us are many. Ground-breaking innovations are required in key sectors like energy, education, healthcare and agriculture. Technological initiatives in these fields will have wide implications. I, therefore, urge the prominent gathering present here to give singular emphasis on these areas. On this occasion, I also take the opportunity of congratulating our agricultural scientists who have contributed to increasing foodgrain production in India to record levels.
10. I must, however, add that radical innovations, which are long-term drivers of growth, must not come at the cost of our environment. With rapid industrialization and the consequent mechanization of different sectors, keeping carbon emissions in check has become imperative. In our quest for technical supremacy, we must always remember that a country's progress, in the true sense, hinges upon striking a balance between fulfillment of economic needs and protection of the natural environment. The rising concerns about global climate change must spur us on to find novel technological solutions to achieve this objective.
11. Devising strategies for inclusive and sustainable development will require collaborative efforts among the public and private sectors. Strong political will and commitment, backed by firm and effective policies; investment in infrastructure and education; and focus on adoption of eco-friendly technologies will enable us to promote inclusive growth without compromising on sustainability.
12. I encourage the innovators, policymakers, and technological spearheads gathered here today to join hands and take our nation to the upper echelons of development. Make India a force to reckon with in the world. I wish each one of you present here the very best for the future.

Thank you.

Jai Hind.

