



President of India Addresses the Valedictory Function of 32nd Indian Engineering Congress

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The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, graced and addressed the valedictory function of the 32nd Indian Engineering Congress organised by the Institution of Engineers (India) in Chennai today (December 23, 2017).

Speaking on the occasion, the President said that a spirit of inquiry and of evidence-based policy – and an abiding faith in technology and innovation as tools for the welfare of the people – has been a hallmark of public life in modern Tamil Nadu. The Midday Meal Scheme that originated in Tamil Nadu gave India a model to combat malnutrition and help in the physical and cognitive development of our children. And whether it is in textiles or IT, precision manufacture or automobiles, Tamil Nadu has used engineering to build a solid industrial economy – creating thousands of jobs.

The President said that engineers are agents of change. Historically it is engineers who have used the logic of science to achieve practical solutions – whether building dams or bridges, whether designing locomotives or computers. From the earliest metal tools to the integrated circuit, from the 18th century Industrial Revolution to the 21st century Fourth Industrial Revolution – it is engineering that has spoken the language of the future. Today, in exploring the possibilities of Artificial Intelligence and the Internet of Things or in realising our aspirations for Make in India, once more it is to our engineers that we turn.

The President noted that these opportunities are all the more important because human civilisation is at an inflection point. The evolution of technology is changing how we live, work and think. It is also challenging the practice of engineering. For example, civil engineers are specialists in materials. They use this knowledge for construction. Yet, this same knowledge of composites and materials will increasingly be deployed for both micro needs – such as creating medical implants for the human body – as well as macro needs – for instance, constructing facilities and maybe even colonies in outer space.

The President said that developments across different fields are creating avenues for cross-fertilisation. Disciplines such as food technology, biotechnology, environmental engineering and transportation engineering are expanding the horizons of engineers. And engineers will inevitably intersect with disciplines as far apart as law, geography and political science. Engineers can play a much larger role in solving key challenges facing our country – in food, healthcare and the environment, in providing low-cost and easy-to-build housing, and in enhancing urban infrastructure with minimum disruption.

Earlier in the day, the President visited the Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Memorial in Rameswaram and paid his respects.

