

IIT ALLAHABAD

Thank you.

Chairman Professor Ravi Kant;

Director Professor Nagabhushan;

Dr Chidambaram;

Graduands and fellow guests.

It is an honour to join you in Allahabad for the thirteenth convocation of the Institute of Industrial Technology.

It is a special pleasure to be at an institution with such a high calibre of leaders.

One cannot help but be impressed by IIIT Allahabad.

Like the study of Information Technology itself, IIIT Allahabad is young, but has demonstrated excellence from the very beginning.

I see the pursuit of excellence everywhere on this Campus.

Whether this is the geometric elegance of your building or the achievements of your student medallists, every aspect of Institute demonstrates a commitment to excellence and innovation.

Crucially too, as a young University, you are able to be flexible.

You don't have to be hide-bound by tradition.

Flexibility, innovation and open-mindedness are essential for success in the modern world.

I applaud your faculty for putting these values at the core of the Institute's curriculum.

The culture you have developed here in just two decades explains how you've already achieved a university rated at the highest level.

Clearly, this is an inspiring place to study, and an institute filled with inspiring people.

I am in awe of your alumni for their success in joining world-leading firms - or starting their own innovative businesses.

Your success success invites us to wonder what lessons we can learn from the growth of IIT Allahabad.

The first lesson is that Indian science and innovation has a rich heritage.

India has long been a culture that respects learning and academic achievement.

The list of Indian innovators in mathematics, computing, engineering and information technology is long and storied.

Like me, Dr Chidambaram will remember how science and innovation were seen as crucial to the success of Indian independence.

India's first leaders believed that our nation could address the enormous challenges the country faced through the acquisition and application of scientific knowledge.

Think of the Dams at Bhakra-Nangal and Hirakud.

Built by Indian engineers, giving power to Indian factories and water to Indian farms.

Think of the Indian technologists who have helped India innovate and defend herself.

So we should remember that our heritage can inspire our future success.

But if science teaches us anything, it is always to look forward.

Here, I think India possesses a unique formula for success, represented by those on stage with me today.

First, we have a passion for innovation in Government.

We are joined today by one of the true greats of Indian innovation in Dr Chidambaram.

At my institution, WMG, our engineers worked closely with engineers from DRDO working under Dr Chidambaram and his colleague President Kalam in the 80s and 90s.

We worked on what you might call a significant project.

So I know firsthand how Dr Chidambaram's leadership transformed innovation in Government science policy.

His passion for innovation led directly to the rapid expansion of electric power and the spread of information infrastructure, two absolutely essential elements for domestic growth.

Without civil nuclear power or the National Knowledge network, it would be hard for the next generation of Information Technology innovators to progress.

Second, we now have a culture of innovation in Indian industry.

I hope I do not embarrass my friend Professor Ravi Kant by saying he is a real leader in this field.

Throughout his career, he passionately embraced innovation.

As leader of Tata Motors, he called it 'Creating a culture of Change'.

Creating that culture meant giving innovators power - whether in designing a new truck, like the Ace, or using the value of academic collaboration to anticipate the next wave of technology change.

Let me give you an example.

20 years ago -before IIT-Allahabad even existed!- Tata Motors went to the Geneva Motor show with the Indica.

It was India's first domestically designed car. Tata had decided to design a car for themselves, not rely on imported innovation.

It perhaps wasn't the most admired car in the world.

But it began a culture of innovation which Professor Kant nurtured.

This year, Tata took the all-electric eVision sedan to the same Motor show, and it stunned the World's motoring press.

How had Tata developed this new model? The designer, Pratap Bose, had been inspired by seeing the Indica as a young designer.

He saw it as "a modern, indigenous product. I saw the car and thought to myself, it must be a fantastic company to work with."

Later, Pratap asked for a meeting with Ravi Kant and Ratan Tata. He presented his ideas, and Ratan said: "Most of the things you said, I disagree with, but it is a good point of view, Would you like to work with us?"

That's what I call a culture of innovation in industry!

So Innovation in Industry and Innovation in government are crucial to success.

But it is the third element that will decide our future, and it is represented by the graduating class.

It is the enormous innovation capability of India's youth, and the chance you have to innovate in India.

We have had always had great Indian technologists.

All too often, however, they found they had to go overseas to make a difference, and possibly, to make their fortune!

This is no longer the case.

The transformed infrastructure, both digital and physical, that India now possesses, along with the transformed culture of Indian business, means there are opportunities for talented young people to make change happen everywhere in India.

Nowhere is that truer than in information technology

The discipline of information technology is the future worldwide, but it is a field of Indian global strength.

India's strength is thanks to the hard work of leaders such as Dr. Chidambaram and Professor Kant.

The scale of the investment is astounding.

Billions are being spent on Big Data, Cryptography, Artificial Intelligence, right here in India.

This creates a remarkable opportunity for the Graduates of IIT Allahabad.

You have a fine education, a strong network, and an exciting world of possibility.

Indeed, many of your Alumni are already showing the way forward.

They're setting up businesses, creating apps and developing charities.

I think of innovative businesses like Clorik, which helps users post vernacular content on Social media.

Or Knudge.me, developed to help people learn English through games and winner of a Google award for best app.

It is the passion of these innovators, whether in a start-up, in the corporate world or government, that we will find the next transformative wave of Indian innovation.

I said at the beginning that I was impressed by the achievements of IIT-Allahabad.

But I also know that in the talents of this graduating class, there are ideas, innovations, and changes to be unleashed which will be prove greater still.

Here in Allahabad, you have been given the finest of foundations.

Today, your talent, hard work and commitment is recognised at this convocation.

I am honoured to graduate with you.

Tomorrow, you will take your place in an India eager to see what you are capable of.

I look forward to watching you change the world.

Thank you.