

**ADDRESS BY THE HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
AT THE 26TH CONVOCATION OF SANJAY GANDHI
POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES (SGPGIMS),
LUCKNOW**

Lucknow, August 27, 2021

I am delighted to be here at the 26th convocation of the Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences. My heartiest congratulations to all who have been awarded degrees today especially the lady doctors. My special appreciation for the medal winners.

The foundation stone of SGPGI was laid by my illustrious predecessor, Shri Neelam Sanjiva Reddy, in 1980, though not in this place but in a park of the prestigious King George's Medical College located in the heart of Lucknow city.

The aim of this project was to create a medical science institute of international standards. Its site, chosen after three years of deliberation was far from the city limits of Lucknow back then. Its benefit was the large space for the campus. I very well recall that with excellent landscaping and state-of-the-art facilities for patients, this institute in its initial stage attracted attention. In subsequent decades as the city expanded, the distance that seemed long in the eighties is now next door within the municipal limits of the city.

As you all know, buildings and facilities alone do not make a world-class institute. The reality is that your predecessors who included many eminent personalities in the field of medical science toiled day and night to make it a premier institute, not only in India but in the world. They fought hard against many odds to bring glory to this institute, which has emerged as a pioneer in super-speciality healthcare and medical research. Thanks to them, the institute established several benchmarks right in 1988, when it started patient care and academic work. It had

some of the best experts in nephrology, urology, neurology and psychiatry in its faculty. People of not only Uttar Pradesh but also from neighbouring areas no longer had to go to New Delhi or Mumbai for specialized care. This institute offered dialysis facilities and kidney transplants when such services were rare outside the two metro cities. Above all, it made top-class facilities available and affordable for the less privileged.

In less than four decades, your institute has lived up to its motto. It says, "Research enhances vitality of teaching, teaching lifts the standards of service and service opens new avenues of investigation." You have excelled, raised the teaching standards, explored new avenues in research and carried out breakthrough research in medical science. I am told that this institute holds fifth spot in the medical category in the country in the recent NIRF ranking. I congratulate all members of the Institute family, both past and present, whose commitment and hard work is behind this phenomenal success.

I also find it especially noteworthy that the institute has shown immense commitment towards the National and State Organ Transplant Programme. You have contributed greatly in raising awareness for a cause that has been saving numerous lives.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The world continues to grapple with the pandemic. In our fight against the coronavirus, medical institutions like yours have worked relentlessly. The Government of Uttar Pradesh too has supported and created facilities like the Rajdhani Corona Hospital for dedicated care of Covid-19 patients. I am told that the laboratory in your institute tested samples from more than 30 districts of Uttar Pradesh, and it has carried out about 20 lakh RT-PCR tests by now.

I appreciate the untiring efforts of all doctors, nurses, medical students, healthcare and sanitation workers and administrators. You have risen to the challenge and selflessly served fellow citizens. You risked your own

life; some of your fellow corona warriors also sacrificed their lives. The entire nation is grateful to you for your dedication.

The battle against Covid-19 is far from over. We must remain on guard against any laxity. Masks and social distance are our first line of defence. And the vaccine is the best possible protection offered by science. True to the vision of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', our scientists have produced 'Made-in-India' vaccines. With the collective efforts of our doctors, healthcare workers and administrators, the nation has been conducting the world's largest vaccination drive. We have made incredible progress with more than 61 crore citizens successfully vaccinated across the country. In Uttar Pradesh, the most populous state of the country, nearly 6 crore 70 lakh people have been vaccinated so far. I appreciate the efforts of all those who are contributing to this great mission.

We are making progress on vaccination but our work is far from over. We have a long way to go and we cannot rest till every eligible individual is vaccinated. I urge you to keep contributing to raise awareness about vaccination.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The pandemic has underlined the importance of healthcare in the most unprecedented way. How can we fulfil the healthcare requirements of all citizens, including the less privileged and those living in interior areas? The use of the latest technologies and especially telemedicine will go a long way in addressing the health challenges before us. I understand your institute was a pioneer in telemedicine and continues to lead the field.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your institute has earned respect for pursuing excellence not only in medical research but also for giving top class tertiary healthcare to patients. I think now the time has come for all of you to expand your

influence all over the state and handhold medical colleges and hospitals which lag behind in specialised medical care. I am told that the chief minister has announced setting up of medical college and associated hospital in every district. It is incumbent upon you to extend your expertise to all these upcoming institutes so that they can be developed as centres of excellence in their own way. This will help people get best treatment within the state which will eventually emerge as preferred destination for healthcare.

Technological solutions will have to be complemented by various forms of therapy too. India has a rich knowledge base in healthcare in the form of Ayurveda. Along with other traditional forms of medicine as well as yoga, it can help treat lifestyle diseases. Yoga is, of course, about much more than physical fitness and healthcare; it is a holistic way of life. During the pandemic, a mix of such traditional methods has helped countless people in India and abroad in boosting their immunity. I am really happy to see yoga becoming a popular movement around the world.

Even more important than method and technology is the human element, that is, the healer. That is where you, who have received degrees today, come in. You have acquired great skills and knowledge; now is the time to put them to use in serving others. For the patient, hoping for relief and recovery, you are nothing less than an angel. Their faith in you is a great responsibility for you. Today, you add to the strength of the larger community of medical practitioners across India, bound by the sacred oath which reminds you of your duty towards humanity without discrimination. May you all be the torchbearers of high ethical standards of this noble profession!

I congratulate the students – the young doctors, nurses, medical technologists and hospital administrators. I also congratulate the Director, the faculty and the staff. I wish you all success in your endeavours. May all of you continue to serve the cause of medicine and humanity!

Thank you.

Jai Hind!