

Address by the Hon'ble President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovind at the 19th Convocation of Tezpur University

First and foremost, I convey my hearty congratulations to all the students.

I commend the efforts of all the students who have received their degrees, diplomas and medals at this 19th convocation of Tezpur University. It is a very important day for all the students, their family-members and teachers. I also congratulate all the teachers and guardians on this happy occasion. Getting an opportunity to live and study in this beautiful and spacious campus must be a delight in itself. In this campus, one gets a feel of the natural beauty of Assam and the hospitality of the people here.

Dear students,

You have spent your university-days in a city which is associated with great cultural icons like Rupkonwar Jyoti Prasad Agarwala, Kala-guru Bishnu Prasad Rava, Natasurya Phani Sarma and Bharat-Ratna Dr. Bhupen Hazarika. I hope you have read their biographies to learn about the great cultural traditions of India and the North-East.

You must be proud of the fact that your Vishva-Vidyalay Geet was written and composed by the great Bhupen Hazarika. The university song has a very meaningful line that says:

Maanavataa-baader dhyaanar pratik Tezpur Vishvavidyalay

which means that Tezpur University is a symbol of concern for humanity. This line echoes his famous song:

Maanuhe Manuhar Babe,

that is, a human being lives for other human beings. This feeling of compassion for entire humanity should be your guiding principle. You

should draw inspiration from the great personalities associated with this university and the city of Tezpur and resolve to contribute to the well-being of the people of India and the world. The glorious traditions of the past should inspire you to work for a great future.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is heartening to note that the States in the North-East give high priority to organic farming. The university can play a major role in branding and marketing of agricultural produce of this region. I am happy to note that the university has received approval under the 'Prime Minister-Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises Scheme' for setting up an incubation centre to process jackfruit and ready to eat cereals-based products. I am told that the Food Engineering & Technology Department has been recognised as State Level Technical Institute for implementation of the Scheme. In this context, I am reminded of the unique Joha rice of Assam which is known for its excellent taste and aroma. It need not be cooked in hot water. It can be put in normal water for a few minutes and can be relished after that. Universities of Assam can help the farmers by branding, popularising and marketing this unique variety of rice. There are many such agricultural products that can be promoted.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Assam is gifted with extraordinary beauty of nature and rich bio-diversity. This has to be preserved. Every resident of Assam, especially the youth has to be very active on the fronts of conservation and sustainable development. I am glad to know about the renewable energy initiatives of the university, especially in the villages. The young population has greater stakes in keeping the planet green. They have to demonstrate greater awareness through their action.

Assam has done a commendable job in conserving bio-diversity. Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, as also the Elephant Reserve are

impressive examples of conservation. During this visit, I will be going to Kaziranga National Park and will also inaugurate an exhibition on conservation. Conservation must be the watch word for every citizen, especially the student community.

Development initiatives for the eastern part of India, specially the North-East are being given special thrust. I appreciate the efforts of the Assam government led by the Chief Minister Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma for onward march of Assam on the path to progress. The young population is both, a driver and a key beneficiary of development and progress. I am happy to note that the university is promoting collaboration with major industries. I am also happy about the university having substantial number of consultancy projects in different areas of development.

Dear students,

Your academic activities have been affected by the Covid pandemic. The pandemic has had serious impact on the education of the relatively vulnerable sections of our people. The National Education Policy 2020 which was released during the pandemic contains specific focus on digital education with the help of technology. With a view to making higher education more accessible, the central government has decided to establish a Digital University to provide access to students across the country for world-class quality universal education with personalized learning experience at the doorsteps of students. The Digital University will provide education in different Indian languages and ICT formats. Tezpur University can become an active stakeholder in this initiative, specially by providing high quality digital content in Assamese and other languages of the North-East.

The students and faculty of Tezpur University should try to make it a major centre of innovation. The university community should provide innovative solutions to local and national problems. For this, community participation

and use of local resources should be encouraged. I am happy to know about innovative solutions provided by Tezpur University for reaching safe drinking water to many villages in Assam. The scope of the university's engagement with villages should be further expanded. As a visitor of the institutions of higher education under the central government, I have been encouraging the institutions to promote Universities' Social Responsibility or USR on the lines of Corporate Social Responsibility. Engagement of students with rural population is one of the key features of USR. Tezpur University can adopt some villages for helping in their overall development.

The National Education Policy 2020 also seeks to provide pathways for the future in a globalized world while preserving time-honoured Indian values like compassion, morality, truth and good conduct. The motto of this university, Vigyanam Yagyam Tanute, reflects the approach of blending the eternal with the futuristic. The motto, taken from a Mantra in the Taittiriya Upanishad lends itself to different rich interpretations. The university has adopted it to mean 'Specialized Knowledge Promotes Creativity'. The Mantra in the Upanishad just after the adopted motto says Karmani Tanutepi Cha which would mean 'Specialized Knowledge Promotes Action Too'. Thus, while Tezpur University seeks to promote specialized knowledge for creativity, it should also seek to promote action. Action oriented creativity and learning should be the composite message as contained in the excellent motto of your university.

I appreciate the establishment of the Centre for Multi-disciplinary Research in the university to undertake research problems with social relevance. The university having more than three hundred research projects amounting to a total grant of nearly Rupees 95 crore is a promising development. I want to share with you all, my happiness in having approved Visitor Award to the esteemed faculty-members of the university in the year 2021 for 'Technology and Development' related to physics, and in the year 2018 for 'Research' related to molecular biology and bio-technology.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am happy to observe that Tezpur University has been promoting women-empowerment through education. I am told that about 1250 students graduated today, out of whom about 45 percent are women. Out of the 47 students who have been awarded gold medals, 27 are our daughters which is much more than half of the total number of gold medalists. I have observed this trend of our daughters out-performing the boys in most of the convocations I have attended. This excellence displayed by women is a reflection of India's future as a gender-just nation. I convey my special congratulations to each and every daughter for her distinct achievement today.

I urge upon the entire team of Tezpur University to keep past, present and future students bound by the spirit of oneness and move rapidly towards the goals set by the university – xopaan bogaam teebro gotire. By moving fast to achieve ambitious targets, the university will be able to contribute meaningfully to India's emergence as a much more prosperous and strong nation by the year 2047 when the students of today will be among the decision makers. The real spirit behind celebrating 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', marking 75 years since our independence, is to build upon our learning so far and aim for higher goals. Tezpur University should strive to be among the top 10 universities in the NIRF ranking in the near future.

I once again congratulate the students for their achievements. I also appreciate the teachers and staff who made the achievements possible for the students. The vice-chancellor and his team deserve to be congratulated too. The residents of Assam, especially the students, are fortunate to have the sage counsel of the governor Professor Jagdish Mukhi who himself is from the world of academia. My best wishes to all of you for all your endeavours to make your own life and the lives of the people of India better.

Thank you,
Jai Hind!