

**ADDRESS BY THE HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA
SMT DROUPADI MURMU AT THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF
DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS OF IIT DELHI**

I am happy to be here with you today on this historical occasion. It is historical not only for the IIT Delhi, but also for the whole country. All the teachers, students and administrators, past and present, deserve rich tributes for raising the bar of educational excellence. Indeed, their contribution was duly recognised in 2018 when the Government named it as an Institution of Eminence.

The Indian Institutes of Technology have been the pride of the nation. When this institute started admitting students in 1961, India was a very young republic, still facing challenges of severe poverty and illiteracy. Yet, India was rich in its potential. The IITs proved to the world the capability of India in the domains of education and technology. In more than one way, the story of the IITs is the story of Independent India.

The IITs have contributed immensely to India's improved standing on the global stage today. Your faculty and alumni have shown the world our brainpower. Some of those who studied here and in other IITs are now at the forefront of the digital revolution sweeping the world. Moreover, the impact of IITs has gone beyond science and technology. IITians are leaders in every walk of life – in education, industry, entrepreneurship, civil society, activism, journalism, literature and politics. Very recently I met a group of IAS trainees and found many IITians among them. Your influence is such that it touches all walks of life.

This is also partly due to the fact that the IITs have expanded outside their traditional strengths in science and engineering. They now offer qualitative programmes in humanities, social sciences, design, management and public policy. This multi-disciplinary approach is well aligned with the new National Education Policy.

The IIT Delhi, in particular, has upheld high standards of teaching and research. Your faculty members are known for cutting-edge scientific research and technology development too, apart from contributions to society. Many of them have been honoured with the Padma awards, Bhatnagar prizes and other notable recognitions. They have also contributed to national and international academies as Fellows.

The students of the IIT Delhi, past and present, have been among the best minds of their generation. The competition to find a seat in this institute is tougher than that for some of the best universities in the world. Such a selection process reflects the quest for quality.

As one of the original IITs, this institution is also a mentor to some of the recent members of the club, namely, IIT Ropar and IIT Jammu. Thus, the IIT Delhi has contributed significantly in building up of the image of the IITs as centres of excellence across the world.

Dear Friends,

Such institutions often run the risk of existing in isolation, as ivory towers. That is why it is all the more heartening to note that the IIT Delhi has always seen itself as part of the larger community and it has been extra sensitive to its responsibility towards society. The latest example of its social concern was seen during the initial phase of the pandemic. Rising to the challenge of containing the virus, the IIT Delhi initiated important research and development projects. It designed and developed rapid antigen test kits, PPEs, antimicrobial fabrics, high efficiency face masks and low-cost ventilators, among other things. The IIT Delhi's contribution in India's fight against the Coronavirus has been a model of how engineering and technology institutions too can play a role in a public health crisis.

The glorious past of this institute gives us an assurance that it will play a crucial role in the future as India enters the Amrit Kaal. By 2047, when we will celebrate the centenary of Independence, the world around us will have changed drastically, thanks to the Fourth

Industrial Revolution. Just as we were in no position 25 years ago to imagine the contemporary world, we cannot visualise today how Artificial Intelligence and automation are going to transform life. With our high population numbers, we need to have a foresight and strategies in place to deal with the forces of future where disruptions will be a new normal. The nature of employment will get completely changed.

If we take steps to protect ourselves from vagaries of the future, we can reap rich demographic dividends. We need to make our institutes adaptable to future. This will require a new teaching-learning matrix, pedagogy and content which are future-oriented. I am sure that with our famed IITs, we will be able to nurture the younger generation with necessary knowledge base and right skills to face the challenge. India will benefit immensely from the next wave of the technological revolution.

I am happy to learn that the IIT Delhi is encouraging research and innovation in a big way. The research and innovation park, inaugurated today, is intended to create an ecosystem in which students, faculty and Industry would exchange ideas to give boost to growth and innovation.

Looking towards 2047, the climate change poses a serious challenge. As a developing country with a high population base, our energy requirement for economic growth is very high. Hence we need to shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy. India, as you are aware, has taken a praiseworthy lead in the international stage in promoting solar energy. In the years to come, as the world anxiously looks for technological solutions to environmental challenges, I trust India's young engineers and scientists will help humankind achieve a breakthrough.

The nation will have similar expectations from the IITs for their inputs in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Dear Friends,

I believe India has a great talent pool which is yet to be tapped fully. Two sections of society offer rich talent, but these students began accessing educational opportunities in significant numbers only after Independence. I am referring here to women and marginalised communities. Their numbers in top-ranking institutes have been increasing in recent times. I am glad to see so many young women here today. I understand that female students at the IIT Delhi have done wonderfully well, even during its initial years. They have successfully busted the myth that very few women excel in 'STEM', that is, science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Their success motivates more and more girls to consider a career in STEM and break a few more glass ceilings. In making India Atmanirbhar, the contribution of its young women is going to be most critical.

To all students here today, I wish to say that you are fortunate to be here and this is the best time of your life. Please use your time in the best possible manner, because the way you shape your career and your life ahead will define the shape India will take in future. I would urge you to keep in mind the concerns of all fellow citizens.

I thank the IIT Delhi community for inviting me here today and let me participate in the diamond jubilee celebrations. I once again congratulate you all, the administrators, faculty, students and the staff, for making the IIT Delhi what it is. I believe its best is yet to come, and it is destined to scale even greater heights. My best wishes are with you in the journey ahead.

Thank you,
Jai Hind!