

Respected Dr. Bibek Debroy, the distinguished Chief Guest of the Convocation, members of the Convocation, colleagues, dear students and esteemed guests. On behalf of the Executive Council of the University of Hyderabad and on my own behalf, it is my privilege and honour to extend you all a cordial welcome to the Eighteenth Convocation of the University.

On behalf of University and also on my personal behalf, extend a warm welcome to Dr. Bibek Debroy, member of NITI Aayog who is the Chief Guest of this convocation. Dr. Bibek Debroy is an economist and is educated in Ramakrishna Mission School, Narendrapur; Presidency College, Kolkata; Delhi School of Economics and Trinity College, Cambridge. He has worked in prestigious institutions like the Presidency College, Kolkata (1979-83) Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune (1983-87); Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, Delhi (1987-93); as the Director of a Ministry of Finance/UNDP project on legal reforms (1993-98); Department of Economic Affairs (1994-95); National Council of Applied Economic Research (1995-96); Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies (1997-2005); PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (2005-06); and the Centre for Policy Research (2007-2015). He has authored/edited several books, papers and popular articles and has also been a Consulting/Contributing Editor with several newspapers.

On 5th January 2015, Dr. Debroy was appointed as permanent member of NITI Aayog. He was

awarded Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award of our Country, in 2015. He was awarded D. Litt. (Honoris Causa) by KIIT University in 2015 and D. Phil. (Honoris Causa) by Amity University in 2016.

Thank you sir, for agreeing to be our Chief Guest at this Convocation.

This year 1564 students are graduating and of these 267 are Ph.Ds. This brings the total number of Ph.Ds produced at the UoH to 2256, and the number of graduating students since the time of its inception to 25464. Before I present my report, I warmly congratulate all the graduates who are receiving their degrees today. My hearty congratulations are also to the 99 medal winners. I hope that for all of you, this is merely the beginning of more laurels and achievements, and as you leave the University to begin the rest of your life, there is no better advice to remember than that of Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, *Have courage to think differently, courage to invent, to travel the unexplored path, courage to discover the impossible and to conquer the problems and succeed.*

Ladies and gentlemen, the University has completed four decades and is regarded as one of the top Universities in India in the area of higher education, achieving honours and attaining standards that set a benchmark for other universities in India. The year 2016 saw the University being ranked among the top institutions in the Country by various ranking agencies both in India and Abroad.

Though these are encouraging indicators, our goal is to compete with Global Institutions and prepare our students to be academically brilliant and responsible citizens. Our faculty who are more than 400 in number, closely work and interact with the 5200 odd students giving them the required guidance in academics and mentoring them to take up challenges that come their way. The faculty have written over 1,300 books and more than 17,000 research papers. We are also pleased to share the news that we have been granted 17 patents. All these have helped us achieve an eminent position of Excellence within the Central University system of our country as indeed on the academic landscape of the nation.

Two of our faculty members have been selected for prestigious awards. Dr. Surajit Dhara of Physics has been conferred the Swarnajayanti Prize. Five days ago Dr. Niyaz Ahmed has been chosen for the most prestigious Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize. Incidentally they have two things in common. The only faculty from a University system to be given this recognition for the year 2016. First one in their respective Schools to bag these awards. Both Dr. Dhara and Dr. Niyaz have been recipients of our Chancellor's award previously. On this occasion, as a token of appreciation, the University announces a cash incentive of Rs: 50,000/- to each. I hope their recognitions will motivate our young faculty and research scholars to give their best.

Our University has to match global standards, possible with consistently good quality of research and teaching. It requires minds that are open to new challenges. Many ideas are needed to fully realize the potential that the University has and must have, the destiny that we need to fulfill has to be fashioned by us each day, not just to see the opportunities that may arise, but also to see the responsibilities that we have. I am happy to share with you that the *University is among the top 3.9% institutions* providing higher education worldwide as per a study done by Centre for World University Rankings 2016 (CWUR). The University has again featured among the world's Elite Institutions in 3 of the 42 subjects featured in this year's QS World University Rankings by Subject. As per this survey and the QS World University Rankings 2016-2017 released on 6 September 2016, UoH has been listed as one of the best universities to pursue higher studies in English Language and Literature, Chemistry and Physics.

On this special occasion, we take pride to note that the University has established recently as part of Social Responsibility of Individuals (SRI), a Students' Aid Fund in the name of the founder Vice-Chancellor, Professor Gurbaksh Singh, and call it as GBSSAF. The funds for this scheme will be mobilized from the teachers, non-teaching staff, students, alumni, philanthropists and anyone who would like to financially help our needy students.

The University has also plans to improve its Golden Threshold (GT) campus in the city with a view to establishing a cultural hub right in the heart of the city. As part of social and cultural responsibility, the University plans to renovate the GT to facilitate several cultural activities on its city campus on a regular basis. The University intends to promote the art and culture through this cultural hub. It plans to work with Government of Telangana in promoting the cultural activities on a regular basis. The University's plan is to provide and create space for art exhibition, a small museum of performing arts and facilitation of performances.

Our faculty have been associated with several important national and international bodies, held Professorships of distinction, both in India and abroad, and participated in the global educational arena with as much vigour as we have always done. Furthermore, they have been funded quite handsomely receiving grants from national and international funding agencies like UGC, MHRD, DBT, DST, EU, DoE, IUSSTF and so on. The University's current extramural R&D funding is about Rs. 260 crores. However, I see scope to improve a lot in this area.

To promote quality in research and teaching the University Grants Commission had introduced, following the Sixth Pay Commission, a Higher Academic Grade (or stage 6) of professorship for a selected few professors of high merit with seniority of more than 10 years. For various

reasons we could not implement it in the past decade or so. The Executive Council of the University has decided to open up this distinction to our senior professors.

In its twelve Schools of study at present the University offers postgraduate and research programmes in several areas of the Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Arts, Management, Medical Sciences, Engineering, Mathematics and Statistics; and Computer and Information Sciences. There are also a large number of students under the Centre for Distance and Virtual Learning Programme through 14 PG Diploma courses.

The UGC-Human Resource Development Centre formerly known as the Academic Staff College at the University is one of the finest of such Staff Colleges established by the UGC. It has so far conducted Orientation and Refresher Courses for the benefit of more than 10,000 teachers from the colleges and universities all over the country. The University now has a Kendriya Vidyalaya for the benefit of its staff, and is also presently running a pre-primary school (LKG and UKG) on the campus for the benefit of employees' children as well as for those from the neighbourhood.

Our annual student enrolment has grown steadily, now over 5,200 in regular courses. Entrance examinations for selection of students are conducted at 37 centres all over the country. The Library at the University has done very well and has a collection of over 3-lakh books and other reference material, and it subscribes to 5540 e-books,

over 311 national and international journals, 82 exclusive online journals and 47 online databases (includes UGC infonet digital library consortium). It is fully automated with special software for the visually-challenged students. For carrying out exemplary work towards the cause of accessibility and ensuring a life of equality and dignity for people with disabilities, the University of Hyderabad was given the *7th NCPEDP- Mphasis Universal Design Awards 2016 under Category C: Corporates / Organizations* on 14 August 2016 at New Delhi.

Our commitment is to fashion a unique and excellent research University which not only be an asset for the country but also a role model for other institutions. Ours is a very special University in the way in which it has made a name for itself, and in the way it has grown. We aim to keep it a very special University in the way that it will continue to excel. I am happy to inform you that for the fourth successive year, the Convocation ceremony is being shared across the world on the internet.

We take pride in the name and position our University enjoys after four decades of its existence. We know how difficult it is to build institutions and how easy it would be to destroy. Notable contributions made by our teaching/non-teaching staff and a large number of highly talented and motivated students, graduated to take a variety of occupations all over the world, have their share in the current status of our University. However, it is also a fact that the faculty guide the University both directly and indirectly in many ways. Faculty, therefore,

continue to have a major stake in shaping the University beyond teaching and research. Nevertheless it is true that the University provides the opportunity for all of us - faculty, students as well as staff- to soar as high as we want. With freedom comes responsibility and that is what we would like to instill in our younger generation so that they can grow in their life and contribute to the nation.

My congratulations once again to all medal winners, PhD awardees, Chancellor's awardees, Dr. Surajit Dhara and Dr. Niyaz Ahmed for their outstanding performances. Let us applaud such achievements with a standing ovation.

Thank you all!

Jai Hind!