

प्रिय विद्यार्थियों, बच्चों, जवानों, शिक्षकगणों, विश्वविद्यालय के अन्य सदस्यों, परिवारजनों, बहनों और भाईयों,

स्वतंत्र भारत के पैंसठ वर्ष पूरे होने पर मैं आप सब का अभिनंदन करते हुए शुभकामनाएं देता हूं, और आप सब को अपने साथ मिलाकर इस बात का संकल्प लेने के लिए प्रेरित करता हूं कि अपनी आजादी को दृढ़ता से बचाने के लिए हम भरपूर कोशिश करते रहें।

हमारे देश की स्वतंत्रता का पंजाब विश्वविद्यालय के लिए विशेष महत्व है। आप सब जानते हैं कि पंजाब विश्वविद्यालय की स्थापना अक्टूबर 1882 में लाहौर में हुई थी। यह इंडियन नेशनल कांग्रेस की नींव रखे जाने से 3 साल पहले का समय था। हमारा विश्वविद्यालय आजादी से करीब 65 वर्ष पहले तक लाहौर में चला। इस वर्ष तक अब यह 65 वर्ष स्वतंत्र भारत में पूरे करने जा रहा है। इन 65 वर्षों में हमारे विश्वविद्यालय का नाम स्वतंत्र भारत के दो राष्ट्रपतियों, दो प्रधानमंत्रियों और दो नोबल पुरस्कार विजेताओं से जुड़ा है। हम सबके लिए यह एक बहुत गर्व और प्रेरणा की बात है।

इस समय आज जब हम सब यहां इकट्ठा हुए हैं, उसी समय दिल्ली के लालकिले परिसर पर प्रधानमंत्री डॉ मनमोहन सिंह जी राष्ट्रीय झंडा फहराने के बाद देशवासियों को संबोधित कर रहे हैं। आप सब तो यह जानते ही होंगे कि डॉ मनमोहन सिंह पंजाब विश्वविद्यालय के विद्यार्थी होने के पश्चात हमारे विश्वविद्यालय के होशियारपुर परिसर में शिक्षक के रूप में भी कार्यरत रहे।

पंजाब विश्वविद्यालय में पढ़े स्नातकों और सदस्यों का शुरू से ही इसको ऊपर उठाने में बहुत मजबूत योगदान रहा है। आज हमारा विश्वविद्यालय देश में कुछ चुनिंदा अग्रणीय विश्वविद्यालयों में से एक है। हमारी यह संस्था आज किसी एक व्यक्ति विशेष की उपलब्धियों और योगदान से कहीं ऊपर उभर कर एक ऐसे मुकाम पर पहुंच चुकी है, कि यह संस्था हम सब से ऊंची ही रहेगी। फिर भी हम सबको मिलकर विशेष रूप से युवा विद्यार्थियों को अपनी नई सोच से पंजाब विश्वविद्यालय को दुनिया की पहले सौ विश्वविद्यालयों की सूची में लाने का प्रयास जारी रखना है।

Let me now turn to sharing with you the contribution of an alumnus of Panjab University who, in my personal assessment, should be a role model for all of us to emulate at whatever age

and stature any of us may be. It applies equally to the young students, faculty members, superannuated teachers and Senators of this University.

The name of this iconic alumnus is Professor Ruchi Ram Sahni who was born in 1863 in Dera Ismail Khan and was named as Rochi Ram by his parents at his birth. He was awarded a Gold Medal in the first ever B.A. examination of Panjab University in 1884. He did his Masters in Science from Presidency College, Calcutta and started to serve as a Professor of Chemistry in Govt. College, Lahore from 1886 onwards. He was also elected as a Senator of Panjab University. He did his Ph.D. in Physics at the age of 54 years under the Nobel Laureate, Lord Rutherford at the University of Manchester in England in 1917. Immediately on his return to India in 1918, he retired from the Government College, Lahore at the age of 55 years.

Ruchi Ram was the first Indian scientist to write a research paper in the Journal, 'Philosophical Magazine', the most prestigious Journal of that era. His first two papers in Philosophical Magazine were single authored, and they were communicated to the Journal by Lord Rutherford himself. Ruchi Ram thanked the young Dr. Neils Bohr in the acknowledgement of these papers. We all learn about the great contribution of Rutherford and Bohr in first few lessons in Physics and Chemistry at school.

When Ruchi Ram Sahni did his Ph.D. work at Manchester, his son, the very famous Birbal Sahni, was working for his Ph.D. in Botany at Cambridge in England.

Along with Birbal Sahni, nearly at the same time, Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar was working for his Ph.D. in Chemistry at London. S.S. Bhatnagar had also been groomed and nurtured by Ruchi Ram Sahni at Lahore. He had arranged a scholarship for Bhatnagar from the Dyal Singh Library Trust at Lahore. Prof. Ruchi Ram Sahni was also one of the founding Trustees of The Tribune started by Sardar Dyal Singh Majithia at Lahore.

After retirement in 1918, Ruchi Ram had plunged into the freedom struggle. Side by side, he also delivered 500 Public Lectures spreading the importance of learning science in the lives of common people in the villages and towns of the then Punjab State extending from Delhi to Peshawar. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, who established Benares Hindu University, Moti Lal Nehru and other national stalwarts of the freedom struggle used to come and stay at Ruchi Ram Sahni's house in Lahore during the Independence movement.

His elder son, Birbal Sahni, born in 1891 at Bhera in Pakistan, was a contemporary of the young Jawahar Lal Nehru (born 1889) at the University of Cambridge in England.

Ruchi Ram Sahni died in Mumbai immediately after Independence in 1948. Unfortunately, Prof. Birbal Sahni also passed away in 1949. The great contributions of Ruchi

Ram Sahni remained unknown to the general public until the Govt. of India commissioned the commemoration of the Birth Centenary of his son, Birbal Sahni, in 1991.

I learnt about the unique personality of Prof. Ruchi Ram Sahni very recently from his grandson, Dr. Ashok Sahni, Professor of Geology at our University, who also served as the Dean University Instruction. Ashok was the son of Prof. Mulk Raj Sahni, also a Professor at our University. Ruchi Ram and his two illustrious sons, Birbal Sahni and M.R. Sahni, along with the iconic S.S. Bhatnagar, were all invited by the Nobel Laureate, Prof. C.V. Raman to be the founding Fellows of the Indian Academy of Sciences, Bangalore in 1934.

For the benefit of the students present here, I have brought a few hundred copies of a four-page write-up on Prof. Ruchi Ram Sahni for distribution.

To conclude, let me also share with you that during the last three weeks, I have attempted to connect to every organ of the Panjab University. We have started to address all the pressing concerns of the students, teachers and other members of the University staff. I have personally visited a few hostels in Sector 14 and 25. We have initiated the selection of new teachers, speeded up the process of recruiting non-teaching, administrative and auxiliary staff, including the security and vigilance staff, as per the needs of the enlarged campus comprising both the sectors.

We have a long journey to traverse to enhance the confidence of the students, their parents and the general public in order to assure them that we are seriously attending to our duties and responsibilities. I trust and hope that I would have an occasion to report progress more specifically on different issues during the next Independence Day address in the year 2013.

ਮੈਂ ਅਖੀਰ ਵਿਚ ਤੁਹਾਡਾ ਸਭ ਦਾ ਸ਼ੁਕਰੀਆ ਅਦਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਭ ਇਸ ਸ਼ੁਭ ਮੌਕੇ ਉਤੇ ਆਏ।

ਮੇਰੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੁਣ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਬੁਲੰਦ ਆਵਾਜ਼ ਵਿਚ ਤਿੰਨ ਵਾਰ ਬੋਲੋ:

ਜੈ ਹਿੰਦ, ਜੈ ਹਿੰਦ, ਜੈ ਹਿੰਦ