

## **INDEPENDENCE DAY ADDRESS - 2017**

Dear new students, continuing students, research scholars, post doctoral fellows, teaching colleagues, supporting staff, non-teaching employees, alumni of the University, and members of the general public who are listeners PU's Radio Jyotirgamaya, it is indeed my privilege to greet you and convey my best wishes to all of you on the eve of completion of seventy years of our independence. For the last five years, the day of August 15 has been an occasion for me to reflect back on the important events and accomplishments of PU during the preceding academic session and share with you the possible plans for the new academic year.

The last year has been a specially challenging one for Panjab University, since its recommencements in independent India on October 1, 1947 just six weeks after the first Independence Day on August 15, 1947. The recommenced University progressed to take its present shape as a large residential campus with traditional departments in fundamental sciences and humanities, co-existing with professional institutes in devoted to Engineering, Legal Studies, Dental and Pharmaceutical Sciences, Commerce and Business Management, Hotel and Tourism Management, etc. In addition to the campus, the PU has in its fold nearly two hundred affiliated colleges, Constituent Colleges and regional Centres located far away from the Campus in the interior of Punjab State and the Union Territory of Chandigarh.

We are well aware that Panjab University was initially established at Lahore by the colonial rulers as People's University in response to a campaign by the Anjuman-i-Punjab; the burden of progression and sustenance of PU was entirely borne by its stakeholders, namely, the parents and the guardians of the students who studied in the High Schools and Colleges of combined Punjab. The continued expansion of education all over North West of Indian sub-continent did not let the pinch of resource crunch for PU to be experienced by PU. The University managed to sustain its other peer institutions in India.

PU is the only University which stood bifurcated seventy years ago at the time of Indian Independence, the trauma of partition, however, did not become a hindrance in its re-establishment and its rapid progress in the new capital city of Punjab at Chandigarh. The Punjab State had got reorganised in 1966 and the domain of PU shrank, resulting in reduction in the internal income of the University,

which necessitated enhanced demand for Governmental support. In spite of continued increase in the enrolment of students subscribing to examinations conducted by PU during last three decades, the inflationary pressure on the expenditure of the University could not be overcome. The freezing of the State support to the University in recent years precipitated a crisis for us as the previous academic session began in August 2016. However, by providence, the worst for us is over and we have begun the present academic session with the assurance from the Central Government and the Punjab State that we shall not face the problem encountered in the previous financial year. The budgets for the financial year 2016-17 and 2017-18 stand balanced.

We need to remain conscious that we have not come out of the crisis of previous year without a stigma. The unfortunate happening of April 11, 2017, when violence was witnessed and the students were arrested had left a deep scar. Much to anguish of all, the Court case against the students is progressing slowly in spite of an appeal having been made on behalf of the Senate of PU for lenient view of happenings on April 11. It is hoped that students will get the due relief from the Court in near future.

There are lessons to learn for all of us from the recent events. Ours is the only University, West of Delhi, where the elections are held every year for the Students' Council. The recommendation for the elections has been submitted to Chandigarh Administration and it is hoped that this process would get completed within next one month.

It is satisfying to note that PU has continued to sustain its academic performance. Several new initiatives got commenced to enrich the academic environs during the previous year. In particular, the Choice Based Credit Based System was introduced in the Honours School in Science subjects at PU Campus.

A number of national icons were invited to prestigious Chairs of the University, like, Shri Gulzar at Tagore Chair, Lt. Gen. K.J. Singh at Maharaja Ranjit Singh Chair. Smt. Ila Bhatt at Mahatma Gandhi Chair, Dr. Manmohan Singh at Jawahar Lal Nehru chair, Shri Kailash Satyarthi at Lal Bahadur Chair. Prof. Yogesh K. Alagh at Dr. Manmohan Singh Chair. More of them have already visited once during the previous year. Shri Kailash Satyarthi ji is expected to deliver the PU Foundation Day lecture in

October and Shri Abhinav Bindra, designated to the Olympian, Sardar Balbir Singh Senior Chair is also due to visit this semester. Olympian Sardar Balbir Singh Sr., the recipient of First Khel Rattan Award of PU, is the Chief Guest at the Independence Day Parade tomorrow morning.

I am happy to recall that PU has adjudged at the second place for MAKATrophy for the year 2015-16. During 2016-17, the self assessed score of PU for MAKATrophy has enhanced by forty percent over the previous year. We are thus confident of retaining at least our previous year's position.

The benefits of nucleation of Chandigarh Region Innovation and Knowledge Cluster nucleated at the initiative of PU has started to make a difference to the opportunities for young people to incubate new ventures using several new Incubation Hubs which have become functional. CRIKC has been registered as an independent Society, it has signed MOUs with UT Administration and Confederation of Indian Industry. A Technology Business Incubator (TBI) funded by DST has come up at IISER, Mohali, Atal Innovation Centre (AIC) is to come up at ISB, Mohali, DBT funded Cluster Innovation Centre in Biotechnology is functional under the aegis of Department of Microbial Biotechnology of PU, large incubation Space stands made available in Centre for Innovation in Applied Bio-processing at NABI/CIAB Campus in Mohali. All these are available for young people and faculties of all CRIKC institutions as common resource. Centre for Policy Research, a DST Project embedded at PU, is synergizing the activities of all incubation hubs, in tricity region. These happenings are unique to CRIKC institutions and this has been particularly commended by the Union Minister of Science and Technology during his two visits to Chandigarh & Mohali in April and August this year.

Five days ago, on the occasion of the completion of 75<sup>th</sup> years of call for Quit India movement in pre-independent India on August 9, 1942, the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi ji, exhorted the nation to take a pledge for New India to be ready at the end of 75<sup>th</sup> year of Indian Independence. Ours such a new nation would be clean, poverty free, corruption free, terrorism free, communalism free and casteism free.

On behalf of the entire PU fraternity, I would like to assure the nation that our national institution, which is a national laboratory to attempt to implement all new

national initiatives, would not lag behind anyone in our contributions to achieve the targets being set for the New India by 2022 by the Hon'ble Prime Minister.

May I conclude by assuring all the new students as well as the continuing students that we shall do our utmost so that you can realize your dreams via your studies and stay at PU Campus.

Thank you for your attention

Jai Hind      Jai Hind      Jai Hind.