

# 2<sup>nd</sup> CONVOCAATION

August 11, 2013

**Address  
by  
Chairman, Board of Governors**

Dr Baldev Raj



भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान गाँधीनगर  
Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar



## **Dr Baldev Raj**

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Chairman, Board of Governors, IIT Gandhinagar

President – Research, PSG Institutions, Peelamedu, Coimbatore

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Dr Anil Kakodkar, former Chairman Atomic Energy Commission, Prof Sudhir Kumar Jain, Director IIT Gandhinagar, Members of Board of Governors, IIT Gandhinagar, Members of the Academic Senate, Faculty and Staff Members of the Institute, invited dignitaries and guests, graduating students and their families, members of the Press and electronic media, ladies and gentlemen: It is with great pleasure that I join Prof Sudhir Jain in extending a warm and cordial welcome to you all. I feel delighted to welcome our Chief Guest Dr Anil Kakodkar with whom I had the privilege of working closely for many years in the Department of Atomic Energy and indeed on many other aspects of national importance. We are indeed grateful to Dr Anil Kakodkar for accepting our invitation to grace the occasion. We are truly honoured to have Dr Anil Kakodkar, in our midst this morning. I am confident that Dr Anil Kakodkar will inspire all of us and especially the students. Dr Kakodkar is a professional and mentor par excellence. He has deep commitment and sensitivity to national progress and security. I have always looked up to him for guidance and encouragement. I must say his inspiration to generations of colleagues and students is iconic and exemplary.

It is a distinguished honour and privilege to be associated with IIT Gandhinagar as the Chairman of its Board of Governors and contribute in charting a new path. IIT Gandhinagar aims to become a leading engineering and technology institute of excellence and relevance in the country and indeed in the world, in the time period of a decade. It is definitely a challenge that the institute has envisioned and is committed to realise. I am delighted to see that the institute is moving towards this goal with energy, enthusiasm sincerity and commitment. The institute, under the dynamic leadership of the Director, Prof Sudhir Jain, has already taken a few unique and innovative measures in the academic programmes, modes of governance and in the empowerment of younger faculty, staff and students. All these tangible and intangible measures are bearing fruit and are enhancing the confidence in our journey of excellence. I wish to mention a few of steps to realise our goals of leadership.

To facilitate Induction of quality students, measures such as liberal branch change policies, top-up scholarship to meritorious PhD scholars, start early PhD fellowships, and engagement with the top 50 undergraduate colleges in India have been taken.

The new undergraduate curriculum is significantly different from any other in the country and focuses on the holistic development of the students. The curriculum integrates measured and relevant exposure to Humanities and Social Sciences contents. To give an example, all undergraduates must credit a minimum of 8 courses in Humanities and

Social Sciences. This content may go up to 17 courses including Management. The five-week Foundation Programme aimed at destressing of the first year BTech students and development of their real life skills, including soft-competencies is unique in many respects. The programme focuses on: a) physical fitness b) communication skills and team work c) values and ethics d) social engagement and e) creativity.

Postgraduate education and research at IIT Gandhinagar has also experienced new paradigms. MTech programme at IITGN focuses on strong interdisciplinary course work aimed at developing skills of analysis, synthesis and problem solving, quality-driven research projects, and has a provision for diversity through mandatory course work in Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines.

Considering the numerous benefits of providing international exposure to our students and opportunities for presenting their research work at international conferences, a liberal travel support policy has been developed wherein PhD students as well as other students receive financial support for participation in conferences overseas.

The institute is conscious of hiring top quality, competent and committed faculty. Identification, motivation and nurturing of faculty is being pursued through a systematic approach. To expedite the selection process whenever there are delays in meetings of statutory Selection Committee, contract appointments are being made through the BoG-approved Standing Committee.

Retaining quality faculty is as important as hiring them. Important initiatives in this regard include Chairs and research fellowships, summer research fellowships, faculty excellence awards, financial support for initiating research activities through “seed funding” with a focus on the needs of proposed research and development rather than through support in terms of fixed seed grants.

To ensure inclusive growth, the institute has also initiated several measures to motivate non-teaching staff by rewarding excellence and motivation.

In line with its mission of producing graduates that are sensitive to the community and to the societal needs, the institute pursues community outreach activities. The institute has a formal Community Outreach Policy that is approved by the Board. We sincerely believe that ethics and sensitivity to society and nature around us shall be important ingredients of successful engineers and technologists of the future.

Thus, IITGN has been pushing the agenda of creating a dynamic and unique academic environment that is globally connected on one side and is socially sensitive on the other side. Strong and effective relationships have been developed with a number of eminent universities. Effective relationships have also been developed with Underwriters Laboratories in Chicago, and Ricoh Innovation Centre in Palo Alto, California and Bangalore.

I am delighted by the excellent synergy in objectives among the Board of Governors, the Director, faculty, students and staff of IIT Gandhinagar. We are conscious about following guidelines of the Government of India but we are also committed to ensuring that avoidable blocks and bureaucracy that come in the way of efficient and innovative working of the institute is curtailed to the best extent possible. I extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to all my fellow Board members and the Director and his colleagues and students.

We are conscious of creating a green campus that will be inspirational and also be beautiful and unique. Function with pleasure and fun to enable the students and faculty to enrich and enhance the objectives of the institute on a path of continuous improvement, is the underlying theme of the new campus. Current progress, on realising this objective, is inspiring and rewarding.

### **My dear graduates**

Today marks an important day in your lives and a significant step in the journey of the institute. Having entered the portals of this institute after facing stiff competition, you have pursued your studies with dedication and commitment. You have met the demands of hard work, maintained high standards and qualified yourselves for this graduation. It is a moment of pride for you, your teachers, parents, friends and indeed, for all of us. The laboratory of life is full of challenges, in which some convert challenges to opportunities and fun. I sincerely believe that you will be the ones, who will bring solutions

for sustainable earth planet through robust science-based solutions in energy, water, food, healthcare, climate changes, habitat, urbanisation, new modes of transport and the like. You have experienced at this institute a beginning of the learning process, and this has to go on and on with the same vigour and determination and indeed needs to be extended to several new dimensions so that you can gain success and serve society and your country. I am sure that each one of you has a different dream, but surely you should enhance dreams and aspirations, for it is these aspirations that will motivate you to higher levels of achievement and make your life purposeful. Most sincerely, I wish each one of you success in your endeavours and in life.

**God bless you.**

Ladies and gentlemen, before I conclude my address, I have a pleasant and privileged task of introducing to you Dr Anil Kakodkar, the Chief Guest of the Convocation. Truly speaking, Dr Anil Kakodkar needs no introduction for the audience present here today or to any one other in the country or the world. However, I derive pleasure and consider it as an honour to present him to the audience gathered here for the convocation.

Dr Anil Kakodkar is an eminent Indian nuclear scientist and mechanical engineer. He was the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission of India and the Secretary to the Government of India as well as the Director of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Trombay. Currently he is the DAE Homi Bhabha Chair Professor at BARC.



Dr Kakodkar obtained a degree in mechanical engineering from VJTI in Bombay University in 1963. He joined the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) in 1964. He obtained a masters degree in experimental stress analysis from the University of Nottingham in 1969.

Dr Kakodkar joined the Reactor Engineering Division of the BARC and played a key role in design and construction of the Dhruva reactor, a completely original high-tech project. He was part of the core team of architects of India's nuclear tests in 1974 and 1998. Further he has led the indigenous development in India's Pressurized Heavy Water Reactor Technology. His work in the rehabilitation of the two reactors at Kalpakkam, that at one stage were on the verge of being written off, are examples of his engineering capability.

Dr Kakodkar became Director of BARC in the year 1996 and Chairman of Atomic Energy Commission of India and Secretary Department of Atomic Energy in the year 2000. He is a member of the International Nuclear Energy Academy and Honorary member of the World Innovation Foundation. He was member of the International Nuclear Safety Advisory Group (INSAG) during 1999-2002. Recently, he has been the principal architect of the report titled 'Taking IITs to Excellence and Greater Heights'. He has published over 250 scientific papers.

Dr Kakodkar is a Fellow of the Indian National Academy of Engineering and served as its President during 1999-2000. He is also a Fellow of the Indian Academy of Sciences, the National Academy of Sciences, India and the Maharashtra Academy of Sciences. He has a very long list of recognitions and awards that include the Homi Bhabha Lifetime Achievement Award (2010), the Rockwell Medal for Excellence in Technology (1997), the H K Firodia Award for Excellence in Science and Technology (1997), ANACON (1998), the Lifetime Achievement Award for Nuclear Sciences, and the Indian Science Congress Association's H J Bhabha Memorial Award (1999-2000). He was conferred the Padma Shri (1998), Padma Bhushan (1999), and Padma Vibhushan (2009) by the Government of India.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is with great pleasure that I invite Dr Anil Kakodkar to deliver his Convocation Address.

Dr Anil Kakodkar please.





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