

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
ON THE OCCASION OF 78TH FOUNDATION DAY
CELEBRATIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF SCIENTIFIC AND
INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH (CSIR)**

New Delhi, September 26, 2019

1. I am happy to be amongst you all on the occasion of the 78th Foundation Day of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research. I fondly recollect attending CSIR's platinum jubilee celebrations two years ago. With each passing year this apex science and technology institution seems to be getting stronger and contributing more and more to our nation's development. I congratulate the entire CSIR fraternity as well as all the scientists who are being awarded today.

2. CSIR is known for its cutting edge R&D in diverse areas. Its work covers a wide spectrum of science and technology. More importantly, CSIR has helped improve quality of life of our fellow citizens and aided business and industry with specific science and technology applications. Across different areas such as food and agriculture, generic drugs, leather, chemicals, several technologies developed by you have been embraced by the market. CSIR occupies a key place in India's scientific space.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. The true test of scientific research lies in its ability to help our society accelerate socio-economic development in various areas of human life such as health and hygiene, sanitation, education and agriculture. In the long run, this ability depends on the extent to which the culture of scientific research and innovation permeates our society, institutions and enterprises.

4. Science and technology is one of the key levers to achieve our national goals and to address the larger concerns confronting humanity today. We have set ourselves a goal of becoming a 5-trillion dollar economy by 2025. We are committed to achieving Sustainable Development Goals. We also wish to play our role in addressing global concerns such as climate change. To a great extent, our success in meeting these challenges would depend on our ability to find creative solutions based in scientific research. In this regard, your work has benefited society in ways that are not always known to many. For instance, I am told that through its interventions, CSIR contributed its bit in saving precious lives during cyclone Fani that hit Odisha earlier this year.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. India is blessed with a youthful population that should be motivated to learn, imbibe and adopt science and innovation. I am happy to learn that CSIR provides a large number of doctoral and post-doctoral research fellowships. The “Jigyasa” program of CSIR is connecting students to scientists and igniting the scientific spirit in school students all across the country. I am told that in the past year alone thousands of school students have visited CSIR’s R&D labs spread across the country.

6. Initiatives such as Skill India, Start Up India and Stand Up India are aimed at releasing and realising the entrepreneurial power of India. Through innovation our entrepreneurs can become solution providers to many of our challenges. Their success will determine our economic future and our growth trajectory. Our academic and scientific institutions, industry and entrepreneurs must collaborate to ensure that scientific research can move from labs to our industry, agricultural fields, incubation centres and start-ups.

7. Today, Dr Harsh Vardhan presented to me the Fuel Cell Prototype that has been developed by CSIR labs in

collaboration with Industry. I understand that this is the first indigenous prototype and the fuel cells use hydrogen to produce electricity. It has possible use for distributed power supply and e-mobility applications. This is an example of how scientific institutions can connect with industry and business for the benefit of society.

8. The scientific community, academic institutions and industry are aware of the uncertainty and risks which are inherent to scientific research, innovation and entrepreneurship. I urge you to embrace that uncertainty and take that calculated risk. There lies the possibility of developing truly transformative technologies and innovations that can help fulfil our goals as a nation, as humanity and as a planet.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

9. I must point out here that none of our successes will have any meaning without equal opportunities for our girl-children. As President, I get an opportunity to attend convocations of Universities and academic institutions across the country. In most of these convocations, I find that our girl students outshine the boys, winning most of the academic awards. Recently, Project Director of Chandrayaan-2 mission, M Vanitha and its Mission Director Ritu Karidhal became household names.

10. Yet on a broader level, the participation of women in science in our country is far from satisfactory. We have to take the necessary steps to ensure greater participation of girl students and of women in science and technology. When this happens, our scientific achievements will become even more wholesome and more desirable.

11. The purpose of education, in its very essence, is to make us a well-rounded personality, a good human being and society. We must develop interest in a range of subjects beyond our own. A good scientist will become a better scientist with some knowledge of social sciences and liberal

arts. Similarly, a student of humanities will gain from an appreciation of science. As academic institutions and as individual students we need to appreciate this and take measures to broad-base our education.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

12. We live in a world where technology surrounds us and dazzles us. Technological products and applications are changing our lives every moment. Space travel is no longer a distant dream, Artificial Intelligence and robotics are no longer science fiction, 3D printers have entered our homes and driverless cars are set to dominate our roads. The relationship between human and machine is evolving before our eyes. Indeed this is all exciting but let it not divert our attention from basic science research. For that remains fundamentally important.

13. We look to CSIR to help us navigate and adapt to this new technological-world as well as to strengthen our basic scientific research. I am confident that CSIR will continue to work on new technologies as well as basic research relevant to our developmental goals.

14. I convey my best wishes to CSIR and its community of scientists. May you continue your illustrious journey in the service of science and society.

Thank You,
Jai Hind!