

71st Republic Day - VC's Speech

January 26, 2020

Dear faculty colleagues, officers, staff, students, children and invited guests,

Greetings to everyone assembled here for the 71st Republic Day celebrations.

Let us pay tributes to our freedom fighters who not only brought independence but also prepared a constitution for us. We are enjoying the freedom brought by their sacrifices and fighting spirit to be independent. We have to remember always that freedom brings rights, but it comes with responsibility. As a University, our outstanding alumni, faculty and staff who served before, brought laurels to the University, and we have to build on this reputation. We now have many things to feel good about our University and it is a great feeling to share them on this very special occasion.

We are the **youngest and smallest** of the 10 public-funded institutions selected for the coveted status of **Institution of Eminence (IoE)** by the UGC and Government of India. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (popularly known as FICCI) has declared University of Hyderabad (UoH) as “University of the Year (in the age group 30 years and above)” for the year 2019. The most recent QS World Rankings 2020 has ranked the UoH among the **Top 601-650** institutions in the world. We hope to break into the top 500 soon. All UoH stakeholders, therefore, have a greater responsibility to maintain UoH's character as the youngest and smallest public institution of eminence.

Our faculty have won several national and international recognitions. Today we have more than 415 faculty who are among the top in their related field with average citation of 40.5 per faculty (Source: QS World Rankings 2019-20). We published 9688 research documents from 1989-2020, with citations at 180,240 and an impressive h-index of 134 and average citations of 5632 per year. (Source: Web of Science). We have the potential to improve to publish in higher impact papers/books and get cited more times with special meticulous planning of our research efforts.

Our University has collaborations with reputed National and International Institutions. In the last 6 months, we signed MoU with Princeton University, USA, University of Bordeaux, France and others. We plan more such MoUs for our students to have opportunities to work for varied periods during their M.Sc./M.Tech/Ph.D. at institutions which are ranked among the best in the world.

Innovative measures for student welfare and academic excellence

UoH sees the IoE as a one-time opportunity to emphasize and reinforce the University's commitment to public education without losing its character in its 45 years of existence. The University has already created a fund for Student Welfare, Academic and Research Grant (SWARG). SWARG is directed at augmenting the financial, infrastructural facilities for students so that the University's commitment to the ideals of the public institution remain unchanged. Prof. Gurbaksh Singh Students' Aid Fund (GBSSAF), for the benefit of meritorious and needy students, also has become a reality now. Very soon, we will augment this initiative of SWARG with funds from IoE.

UoH Students' Assistance has been increased from this academic year from Rs. 750/- per month to Rs. 1,000- per month. **More support will come for the meritorious students from IoE.** University wants to support meritorious students in the pursuit of their goal of higher education at this young Institution conferred with IoE status.

Innovative Measures to Leverage Graded Autonomy/IoE

IoE team has planned a series of innovative measures to leverage the Graded Autonomy and the IoE status. The University is all set to energize its academic programs, especially the research component.

Two new cadres – University Distinguished Professors and University Research Professors – are being instituted to promote research excellence by professors. Further, the young Assistant Professors at UoH will have avenues to move up as Research Assistant Professors. The University expects these selected faculty members, supported by the IoE project, to enable enhanced output of quality publications, patents, policy papers, books and other outcomes. With this initiative under IoE, the University hopes to not only reward its best researchers but also position itself as a top-class space for research, where the work by such professors will be highlighted.

To further encourage our young faculty, fast-track promotions from Assistant to Associate Professor positions are also planned for the highly productive and high-impact faculty. Such unprecedented initiative, in a public University like UoH, is primarily to attract highly talented faculty seeking employment, even as it invigorates the existing faculty to work better.

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We have strengthened our Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), in keeping with recent developments and injunctions from the UGC about Academic Integrity, when promotions and appointments are made, subjecting the publications of candidates to qualitative rather than mere quantitative assessments.

Overall, the IoE is our major source of avenue to pursue excellence in research and teaching to the greater benefit of our students. We expect the IoE to enable greater leverage in our productivity being recognized globally. The IoE seeks to ensure that our students are globally eminent, and most sought-after by employers. The IoE logo, designed by our students, through an open competition, is set to be unveiled today. **IoE is a renewal of our commitment to world class public education for all.**

The University faculty and students have left their footprints across the globe. Some of them have received coveted awards and recognitions. Prof Ramalinga Sastry of Department of Dance is among the 44 artistes announced as winners in the field of music, dance, theatre, folk music and overall contribution in the performing arts by the Sangeet Natak Akademi, India's National Academy of Music, Dance & Drama. There are two most recently announced awards for our students. Our recent Ph.D. graduate Dr. Mohd. Javed Ali won the coveted Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar award for the year 2019. Two of our students – Ms. Soujanya and Mr. Harikrishna – were selected for the prestigious national awards under NSS and received these awards from His Excellency President of India Sri Ram Nath Kovind ji. These two students worked under the guidance of Dr. V. Srinivasa Rao, NSS Coordinator. Other faculty have also acquired global standing as well, according to recent reports. They are: Prof. R. Chandrasekar of School of Chemistry in the Advanced Optical Materials Hall of Fame, and Prof. K. Narayana Chandran of Department of English at #9 in Arts and Humanities research publications across all Asian nations – to mention just two.

UoH's commitment to the SDGs

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by all United Nation's Member-States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. We, as a responsible institution, have taken initiatives towards executing the SDGs.

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In order to have sustainable development and emerge as carbon-neutral campus in 10 years, the UoH has initiated several measures:

* We have an installed 1.140 MW capacity solar power on buildings, generating 21,11,358 KW/year electricity reducing the power bill to the extent of Rs 14.00 Lakhs/month. At present, about 15 % of the power requirements are met from the power generated on our rooftops. The University proposes to increase the capacity in two phases, 2MW each, to reach a total of 5 MW of solar power generation on the campus.

* We have replaced many street lights with LED bulbs, which consume less electricity, needs less maintenance, as the longevity of the bulbs is high, does not easily break down due to fluctuations in electricity supply, and the light itself is not harsh to human eyes.

* Fiber-glass Reinforced Plastics (FRP)-based sewage treatment plants have been installed using Jhokasou Technology for treating 650 KLD of water and a large portion of it is recycled for our use.

- We are a model University with our continued efforts to protect water resources at UoH. These efforts include: developing a network of check dams to store water, harvest rainwater from the rooftops and directing flows of water to recharge ground water. The University has made plans to augment the water resources by desilting the four major lakes/tanks (Peacock lake, Gundla kunta, Chilakala kunta and Ganneru kunta) and bringing them to their full capacity storage, and constructing new check dams and rainwater harvest pits, over and above the existing systems in place. To carry out all these works at a cost of Rs. 3.50 crores, the University is approaching the Ministry of Jal Shakti and corporate companies.

- To preserve the natural habitat and to keep the campus pollution-free, the University of Hyderabad has taken a small step towards Greener Campus. Environmentally friendly e-Auto Rickshaw services have commenced on the campus.

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- We are receiving cooperation from all the members of the University family in attaining a 'GREEN CAMPUS' status for the University. The GHMC has been actively engaged in increasing the Green Cover with tree plantations at regular intervals inside our campus. In the last year, close to 50,000 saplings have been planted inside the campus, in association with many agencies, including the *Times of India*, Aveva and GHMC.

With all these measures, we hope to contribute towards SDGs in the next 10 years towards building better campus and its neighbourhood, and thus towards a better quality of life on our planet.

Recent and future expansion of quality work and amenities spaces

During the last 4 years, the University has made a significant effort in addressing the requirements of major infrastructure. XII Plan, Higher Education Funding Agency (HEFA) under different schemes, SCIS own funds, and IoE have enabled us towards this objective. Under XII plan grant, we have constructed Earth Sciences building at a cost of Rs. 5.72 Cr., extension to School of Humanities Building at a cost of Rs. 3.96 Cr., , an Amenities Centre at an estimated cost of Rs. 12.25 Cr. and State-of-Art Animal House facility at a cost of Rs. 5.79 Cr. We have also constructed an extension to School of Computer Science building at a cost of Rs. 4.59 Cr. drawn from Academic Development Fund of SCIS and IDRBT. Further, a new building for School of Physics at an estimated cost of Rs. 20 Cr is coming up. In addition, we are also completing Amenities Centre at an estimated cost of Rs. 12.25 Cr. with an amphitheatre for student activities and a food court to provide opportunity for the campus residents to have a multicuisine restaurant. MHRD has approved a state-of-art lecture hall complex and the much needed extension of teaching lab space for Chemistry and Life Sciences at an estimated cost of 33.90 Cr.

The Higher Education Funding Agency (HEFA) has sanctioned Rs. 127.33 Crores to support infrastructure needs of our University. Under this project, we will have an extension building for Sarojini Naidu School of Performing Arts & Communication at an estimated cost of 18.8 Cr., School of Engineering Sciences and Technology at Rs. 34.26 Cr., School of Economics at Rs. 12.23 Cr., E-Learning Centre at Rs. 3.41 Cr., School of Mathematics at Rs.11.21 Cr., Extension for School of Physics at Rs. 8.39 Cr., International Faculty House (10 nos.) at Rs. 3.29 Cr., International Students' Hostel (50 rooms) at Rs. 7.99 Cr., Construction of Multi-storied Block Housing at Rs. 9.43 Cr., etc.,

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It's been a year since we have been mentoring the Central University of Andhra Pradesh (CUAP) in Anantapuramu, Andhra Pradesh. The classes for the students are being held in Transit Campus of the Central University of Andhra Pradesh. Now, the Indian Parliament has passed the Act on establishment of the new university at Anantapur and we will continue to guide it to develop it into a good University.

I share with immense pleasure the news that last year we had 139 companies visiting the campus for placements and 341 students being offered jobs. Recently, two M. Tech. students of University of Hyderabad Ms. Mounika Akula ((Integrated Circuits Technology)) and Mr. Pankaj Venuturapalli, from Centre for Advanced Studies in Electronics Science and Technology (CASEST), School of Physics received International Placement offers from **Silicon Austria Labs (SAL)**, Austria. This year, already 45 companies have visited the campus and 165 students have been placed.

To close this address, I wish to remind all of us that our long-term vision and mission under IoE is “**National Needs, Global Standards**”. Our core values seek innovation and interdisciplinarity, integrating hard sciences with humanistic studies and social inquiry, reinvigorating literary and linguistic studies with digital technology. As a significant contributor to the developing nation's knowledge economy, the University hopes to offer enhanced knowledge services in fields as wide-ranging as health and disease management to drug studies, nanotechnology to financial economics, and linguistics to literary studies. Our University's research work aspires for global standards in order to truly fulfil national needs.

Let us believe to work with a principle that we must demonstrate our commitment before we preach someone to practice. I was sharing my thoughts in a recent conference that our University had jointly organised with Indian School of Business and Federation for Democratic Rights. To look for a change in the present money-driven politics, the Universities should be laboratories that experiment with approaches to reduce the dominance of money power, mainly because the resources for the legislative, executive and legislative structures are trained by and in the Universities. All of us should, therefore, strive to prove that UoH is a role model institution for any democratic reforms in our country.

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With the innovative measures that we could initiate with the support coming from IoE, our commitment to SDG goals, our efforts culminating in building quality space, and our commitment to democratic reforms, I am confident that we are poised to make UoH a precious jewel that India will be proud of.

Do you agree with your Vice-Chancellor that we will be a precious jewel of India?

I seek a promise from all the stakeholders of the University.

Let us pledge: **“We promise to keep this campus clean and green”**.

Finally, let us gratefully acknowledge the support given to us by the MHRD and UGC and all other national and international funding agencies for the excellent support, including the IoE status, to this small and young Institution.

I conclude with warm greetings, once again, on this 71th Republic Day to everyone present here with tributes to our national leaders who brought us this freedom.

JAI HIND