

# *Independence day 15th August, 2010*

*N. Sathyamurthy*

*My dear students, colleagues and friends,*

*My heartiest greetings to each one of you on this joyous occasion of our Independence day. 63 years ago, we as a Nation regained our independence after considerable struggle and sacrifice by our elders. Thanks to their sacrifices, we are able to stand proudly as independent India.*

*63 years ago this day, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of Independent India gave his famous speech, referring to our tryst with destiny. In our own little domain of IISER Mohali, I stood in front of some of you, three years ago, hesitatingly resolving to build the Institute. Today, we stand in our own campus, in front of the first functioning building. For those of you, who came recently, it may not mean much. For those of you, who joined early on in this Institution building exercise, it means a lot. We have come a long way and we still have a long way to go! I wish to thank each one of you for helping us reach where we are today.*



*Flag hoisting by Prof. N. Sathyamurthy*

*Only recently, some of you heard Dr. Sanjay Trehan of Panacea Biotech tell us, how we have to dream and dream BIG, if we want to become a developed Nation and not remain a developing Nation. Science holds the key to our success. This was realised by our forefathers, who invested in a big way in science, against the advice of the English. You can see that we are reaping the benefits of the investment made in the past.*

*I am getting tired of talking about Raman, Bose, Ramanujan and other giants of that generation. It is time we talk about the more recent ones. Not enough to talk about Khurana and Chandrasekhar. We can definitely talk about Venki Ramakrishnan, who got the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for the year 2009. An young man trained in physics in M S University, Baroda turned to biology problems and won the prize in chemistry. That speaks of the changed times. That speaks the value of an interdisciplinary approach to modern science.*

*By the way none of these people got the Nobel Prize under the Indian flag. It is time some Indian gets a Nobel Prize for the work done in India. Some people do not like the fixation about the Nobel Prize. It is only a symbol. I am quite happy talking about Manindra Agrawal and his undergraduate students, who discovered a prime factor algorithm. That made them famous overnight. I want each one of you to discover something and become famous when you are at IISER Mohali. It is possible. You learned only two days ago about Vinay Deolalikar solving the P versus NP problem. If the claim is true, he will get the Clay prize, worth a million dollars!*

*Your own teachers have made some fundamental contributions or have thought of a problem worth solving. They have been recognized recently. Professor Sudeshna Sinha was elected to the Fellowship of the Indian Academy of Sciences, Bangalore. Professor Kapil Paranjape was elected to the Fellowship of the Indian National Science Academy, New Delhi and more recently, has been awarded J C Bose Fellowship. This will be in addition to his salary and Rs. 10 lakhs per year for his research. Drs. Kamal Priya Singh and Ananth Vekatesan have been selected for Ramanujan Fellowship. Dr. Lolitika Mandal has been selected for the DBT-Wellcome Trust Fellowship that will give her about Rs. 2.7 crores for carrying out research on stem cells. Dr. Neal Gupta, who will*



be joining us on Sep. 4, 2010, has already been selected for the Ramanujan Fellowship. I am sure this list will grow each year. Please join me in congratulating each one of them.

Our students are doing well in their domain. Today we will be awarding the CNR Rao foundation Prize for the topper in the second semester of the first year and Academic excellence prize for all the best performers in the last semester.

We are standing in front of the Central Analytical Facility, which houses some of the sophisticated equipments: 400 and 600 MHz NMR machines, single and powder X-ray diffractometers, CD spectrometer, AFM, NSOM and microRaman facility. I hope you will all make full use of them and discover new things. Today, the government is willing to spend on us. It is actually an investment for the future. Do not worry about packages. If you make one discovery, you will make more money than all those package guys, who slog in front of the computers or put a tie and a jacket and try to increase the sales of soaps and perfumes. Those of you not interested in making money, I can assure you that you will get something money cannot get. That is, satisfaction! Most of you would not know, I wrote the first three dimensional spline program when I was a PhD student. When I was asked by my supervisor whether I would like to sell it to some company and make some money or distribute freely, I chose the latter! Ramanujan never made any money. Died in poverty and left his wife in poverty. Professor TR Seshadri of Delhi University did not leave any money for his wife! Those days are gone. Today you can live comfortably as a scientist or a Professor. Look at many of us. We make enough money to live comfortably. And yet we have the freedom to pursue our passion, our science.

The students of IISER-M are doing very well. Each one of you get either a KVVPY scholarship or an INSPIRE fellowship. All that the Institute expects in return from you is to maintain a minimum CPI of 6.0. That is not too much to ask for. You have to maintain an average C grade. If you attend all the classes and do the homework and spend a few hours reading every day, it is difficult not to get a C grade. There is no excuse for not getting a minimum of C grade. If you have a problem with the language, talk to the teacher. If you have a problem with the teaching, give the input to the teacher. We have some outstanding teachers among our faculty! Our lab sessions are slightly different from what you saw in your school or what you see in a college. We want to innovate. We want you to innovate. Come up with new ideas, new experiments. Innovate, innovate. Innovation is the key for success in today's world.

When you go outside, when you send emails tell good things about IISER Mohali. Paste good things about you and your Institute in the Facebook. Do not bite the hand that feeds you. Do not say bad things about your own institute. Others will neither respect you nor your Institute. If you find something wrong, correct it. Become a part of the solution. Do not become a part of the problem.

I know many of you are not happy with the hostel, the mess and the space in the Institute. Walk around. The hostel is almost ready. We will move all of you soon. My own landlord has asked me to vacate the house. I will also move soon. Together, we will make IISER-M a great place to be.

*Look around you. You all have come from different parts of the country. Each one has a problem. Either personal or family. Easy to get depressed thinking about your problems. When you listen to others, you realise how lucky you are. Think positive. Look at the mirror. If you smile, it smiles. If you frown, it frowns. Be good to yourself. Be good to your neighbour. Be good to the Nation.*

*Jai Hind!*

*Place : Mohali*

*N. Sathyamurthy*

*Date : 15/8/2010*