

Independence day 15th August, 2012

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Dear colleagues and students:

Happy Independence day greetings to you all!

As I was preparing today's speech, I could not help looking back at the Independence Day in 2007. There were a few of us and the first batch of 25 students! The first class room was getting ready and the first lab was yet to be ready. The land was yet to be allotted.

We had very little in terms of infrastructure, but we had a dream, a dream of building IISER Mohali. All the students stayed in NITTR hostel. They shared rooms but they did not complain! We were delighted because the Director, NITTR invited all of us for a free lunch that day.

But today, things are different! We are in our own campus, in our own buildings. It is true that once again some students have to share rooms. But that is for a short while. Soon, some accommodation will be available. Our new guest house will be ready. By May 2013, two new hostels will be ready. Shortage of accommodation will be a thing of the past.

The first batch has graduated! We had a wonderful first convocation, in our own lecture hall complex, fully with audio and video and air-conditioning facility. Underneath that happy atmosphere, I was feeling sad. I was feeling sad because some of the students of the first batch had threatened to boycott the convocation just the day before. After the convocation, I learned that one graduate was actually sitting in the hostel and was not attending the convocation. Clearly something has gone wrong! Clearly I had failed in communicating with my own students. The students for whom, my wife and I spent five years of our life. Clearly, some of them became alien and were no longer partners in building IISER Mohali.



But all is not lost. Some of the students are doing extremely well. Wherever I go, I hear good things about our students and their capabilities. Some of the graduates will be pursuing their PhD programmes either in India or elsewhere. Some of them have decided to do an MBA and some want to become IAS officers. Does

not matter what they do in their lives, as long as they do well, we will be proud of them. We want to do value addition. That's all.

I want to congratulate the students receiving the CNR Rao foundation prize and the Academic Excellence Prize today. I am happy to see that some students have taken to research like fish to water. Please join me in congratulating Biplab Nandy for publishing a paper on his own in the journal Electronics. I want to see more such initiatives by the students. Several other students have published papers with their mentors. I request Professor Bagla to compile them all.

Three of our second year students, Shwetha, Srijit Mukherjee and Vivek Sagar have been selected to participate in the Asian Science Camp in Jerusalem, Israel. Two of our students, Nitish Tayal and Nilmani Singh have gone to the University of St. Andrews on an exchange programme. Two students, Neyme Veli and Louisa Wallace came from there. I hope more such exchanges will take place.

Some of our faculty members are doing exceedingly well. Laurels and recognitions have come their way. DBT-Wellcome trust fellowships, Ramalingaswami fellowship, DAE young scientist award, etc., to mention a few. I congratulate my colleagues for the same.

I am happy that we have taken possession of the lecture hall complex and the academic block 1. In another two months, we will be fully set up. There is an army of people who have contributed silently to the growth of the Institute. I salute them all.



India's independence was won by hard struggle and sacrifice by our elders. Many of us in this audience know what hardship is. Even today, there is a large number of students who know the value of what they have got. Unfortunately, there is a number who don't know the value of what they have in IISER Mohali.

To most of us, the most important thing we have in this country and in our institute is the freedom. The freedom to express and the freedom to do what we want. The government has spent more than 300 crores of

rupees so far in building IISER Mohali. More than 200 crores have gone into building the infrastructure. Some of you may not realise this. But that is the truth. It is the tax payer's money. Nowhere else does a faculty member get the kind of start up facility some of our colleagues have got in this institute.

The students are expected to attend classes and learn. Some of them are confused about the freedom to drink alcohol and smoke and disturb others. They are eloquent about their freedom. Please remember, freedom comes with responsibility. The government is investing heavily on you. If you think it is too much to ask you to study and follow the discipline, my message to you is: please pack up and leave. This Institute is meant for people who are interested in pursuing their studies. You do your job, success will follow. All successful people have earned their success by hard work and sacrifice. Not by drinking and smoking and creating nuisance to the neighbours!

We are here because of the students. We have no job without them. But that does not mean that the students tell us what we should do. Each one of us must do our bit. Our bit in building our Institute. Our bit in building the Nation. If we do that, then we can justify the trust placed on us.

I wish you all a happy independence day!

Jai Hind!

Mohali

Dae : 15/8/2012

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