

73rd Republic Day - VC's Speech

January 26, 2022

Dear faculty colleagues, officers, staff, students, children and invited guests: Greetings to everyone assembled here for the 73rd Republic Day celebrations. We have completed 72 years of our Indian Republic, today.

Our country became independent and prepared the Constitution that guides us to function as a secular, democratic and republic nation. We have also gained respect and admiration among the nations in the world. Let us pay tributes to all those who made sacrifices and fought for our independence and made us a proud Republic. Freedom and the Constitution have given us rights, along with a mammoth responsibility.

As a nation, in two years of outbreak of the pandemic, we have been successful in not only researching and producing Covid19 vaccines for our citizens as well as for other nations; but also working towards containing the spread in India. Though the new variant causing the third wave is quite active, it's shown to be less virulent and I am confident that we as a nation will come out of

this stage too. The cases in the campus too are rising, as I speak now, we need to keep up high vigil and exercise utmost care. The end of covid pandemic is really not within our sight. We have had 5 successful vaccination camps at the university so far for the benefit of campus community.

We have students, faculty and staff drawn from all over the country. Our outstanding alumni, faculty and staff who served the University of Hyderabad before, have brought many laurels to the University and we salute them too on this day.

We have a greater responsibility in the coming years to live up to the expectations of the nation, as the Institution of Eminence under public institutions category. As an IoE, let us serve as a catalyst in driving the knowledge-driven society of our nation. Let us commit ourselves to working with 'National Pride' on this Republic Day. National pride is critical for designing, adopting and implementing required values for a better nation.

I am very happy to note that several of our students have been selected for the Prime Minister's Research Fellowship (PMRF) due to their excellent performance over many years and consistently high NIRF ranking.

The 2021 NIRF places UoH at 9th spot among all universities and 17th among all institutions. Here we need to put in more efforts and ensure that we move up in the rankings. We have fared well in Global RUR Rankings 2021. Out of the 13 institutions figuring in this ranking from India, UoH is the only University to be ranked after IISc, the IITs and IISER-Pune, in the top 6 in India. It stands 350th out of 867 institutions globally.

The University is now among the top Institutions ranked by QS in Asia Rankings 2022. It is ranked 156 out of the 687 higher education institutions ranked in Asia and is in the top 22.7%. Yes, we definitely need to improve on this and all of us need to put in more dedicated efforts in research and academic activities. We should go deeper and wider in our efforts in this direction.

Our university continues to be in the top position in Nature Index 2021 ranking. It has been ranked First among universities category in India.

It's a moment of pride that the annual performance result of Institution's Innovation Council (IIC) 2020-21 shows that the rating

of UoH has increased from 1.50 in the previous evaluation to 3.50 in the present one.

I am happy to learn that 2 patents have been granted to Prof. Anand Kondapi, Department of Biotechnology and Bioinformatics, School of Life Sciences, which was made official in December 2021. One is for **'targeted delivery of a combination of antiretroviral drugs to HIV-1 infected cells'** and the other for **'treatment of HIV-1 infection as a new line of therapy'**. I congratulate him and his research team and call upon all our researchers and faculty to work for the betterment of our country and society.

It's a great honour that we have instituted two Memorial Awards, in honor of Prof. Gurbaksh Singh (First Vice-Chancellor of UoH) and Prof. A Srikrishna (First Ph.D. awardee of UoH), with the support from Dr. Reddy's Institute of Life Sciences (DRILS). Prof. Ashwini Nangia from the School of Chemistry and former Director of NCL, Pune, was chosen for the Prof. Gurbaksh Singh Memorial Award and Prof. Ashok Karumuri from Centre for Earth, Ocean and Atmospheric Sciences, School of Physics, was chosen for the Prof. A. Srikrishna Memorial Award for the year 2021.

Our University Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) does a commendable job, 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. The University has, through a designated Task Force and the IQAC, prepared and submitted the report for NAAC reaccreditation in 2021. All of us need to ensure that “quality counts” in every aspect.

Under the IoE, we have already launched a few schemes and hope to build on some more, which are in the pipeline. The IoE project is our major source of revenue and opportunities to pursue excellence in research and teaching to the greater benefit of our students. The IoE seeks to ensure that our students are globally eminent, and most sought-after by employers. The IoE has also launched several student incentive schemes.

The year **2020-21** witnessed good placements in spite of the pandemic and lockdown. The Placement Guidance Advisory Bureau team has been able to coordinate with the companies and have ensured placements for **421 students in 230 companies**. For year **2021-22**, **about 269 students** are already placed in various companies so far, and this number is likely to go up further.

A total of 13 buildings are at different stages of completion with an investment of about Rs. 160 crores. Most of them will be available before December 2022. In addition, we plan to invest to build world class infrastructure worth over few hundred crores, in a short span of 2-3 years.

We have more than 30,000 alumni. Several of them are working across the globe in different organizations in different capacities. They are proud of their alma mater UoH and we are proud of their career progression. On many occasions our alumni have taken out time to meet our faculty and officials whenever they are travelling in India and abroad.

I congratulate one of our alumnus, Prof. V Bharathi Harishankar of the Department of English at UoH and presently a member of the School Board of Humanities, for being recently appointed as Vice-Chancellor of Avinashalingam University for Women, Coimbatore.

We would like our alumni to be more involved and contribute more for the progress and eminence of our University.

The UoH has been selected for a prestigious European Commission Project for its internationalization strategy. As part of a seven-country initiative led by the University of Zaragoza, Spain and the European Policy Development and Research Institute, Slovenia, “The Harmony Project” seeks to build capacities in each of the partner institutions to promote and improve access to its academic programmes for international students.

While the intellectual resource of faculty and students have brought us several (too many to list here) laurels, we must remember and gratefully acknowledge the required grant support given by the Ministry of Education and the University Grants Commission. We also received substantial funding from other national and international funding agencies. I thank all of them on behalf of the University. With all such support for the small group of 5500 students and 400 plus faculty, let us try to fly high and become the best University in the country and a top ranking one globally.

Let us use the National Education Policy 2020 of Government of India to fulfill the expectations. Our NEP-2020 is about to be launched in next academic year 2022-23. NEP- 2020 committee has done a laudable work in road mapping the implementation of NEP-2020. We need to gear up towards newer and novel multi-

disciplinary course curriculum much more student-centric and competitive. More innovative and far reaching e-learning modules need to be designed and implemented in NEP-2020.

I also find it necessary to mention the laudable service put in by all our essential services offices, in the wake of the Covid-19 outbreak. Most of the staff and offices have stood firm and worked hard during these testing times to keep the university running and strong . I request all my students and colleagues to follow all the covid rules and regulations in place to make our campus safe and free from Covid19. Let us all own our UoH and place its interests first and grow in your chosen fields with unbound limits. We pledge that the university, the society and the Nation come first and individuals later.

I conclude with warm greetings, once again, on this 73rd Republic Day to everyone present here, with tributes to our national leaders who brought us this freedom and built such a strong constitution for us.

JAI HIND, JAI BHARATH