

Prez urges institutes to innovate

Says Higher Edu Should Match Global Standards

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Pune: President Pranab Mukherjee has urged institutions of higher education to initiate fresh research in energy, environment and health sectors.

Speaking at the third convocation ceremony of the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) in the city on Sunday, Mukherjee said that centres of excellence must be built to nurture the core competence of our institutions in select areas.

Union HRD minister Smriti Irani, chief minister

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Prithviraj Chavan, IISER director K N Ganesh were present. Mukherjee also inaugurated the academic complex of the institute.

"Our institutions must never be found wanting in their proclivity for cutting-edge research. They must promote innovation. They must beat their current inertia and establish productive association with the industry through internships and research projects," said the President.

Mukherjee said that collaboration with top global institutes, hiring of foreign faculty and drawing of students from abroad must receive sustained focus. "Institutions and other stakeholders in the educational domain must have the requisite functional systems within them to real-

ize multiple goals for quality upgradation. This calls for a governance structure in the higher academic institutions that is flexible, monitorable and transparent," he said.

Mukherjee asked the IISERs to train students to pursue rewarding careers in science and technology, considering the vast pool of talented science graduates the country needs.

"Our higher educational institutions do not match global standards as brought out by international surveys and rating agencies. Though subject-wise, a few institutes manage to garner higher rankings, their achievements are mostly peripheral as they are not within the top 200 universities in the world in overall ranking. I do not find any reason why today we cannot occupy our rightful place in the country of nations when we have excellent faculty and brilliant students."

Mukherjee said that emphasis has been laid on science education to switch to knowledge-based society. The IISERs are a product of this effort to push the country to the frontiers of scientific knowledge.

Irani said the country must have highly skilled resources. She appealed to IISERs to inculcate a sense of science in government schools and colleges to increase enrolment.

Chavan said research today has to be multi-disciplinary. He also stressed on the need for a lot of reforms in the higher education sector.

As many as 48 IISER Pune students received graduate degrees and 13 students received doctorate degrees.



Chief minister Prithviraj Chavan, President Pranab Mukherjee, governor K Sanjay Ranarayanan and Union HRD minister Smriti Irani at the convocation ceremony at IISER on Sunday

HRD ministry to interact with academics, students online

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Pune: Emphasising the need to improve employability of graduates in the country, Union human resource development minister Smriti Irani said here on Sunday that her ministry will open an online and personal interface to advise it on the problems areas in education.

"Any soon, the HRD ministry will open up online and through a personal interface, set up committees and advisory bodies which will not comprise politicians and bureaucrats but will have some of the best institutions, academicians and student body representatives," Irani told students of the Symbiosis International University.

She pointed out that India adds three million graduates every year, but according to India's needs, less than half of them are employable.

"However, we leave our graduates to industry and hence their employability? This is not something a politician to ponder alone," she said, appealing to the students to contribute suggestions to the pressing problems of the day.

She urged increased support to student bodies, contribution of alumni and increasing fund allocation to research to improve academic



Union human resource development minister Smriti Irani in the city on Sunday

growth as some of her priorities. She said she wants students to graduate not just with dignity and honour but with the possibility of being employed and being able to employ others.

At the function, university chancellor S B Mujumdar and the principal director of Symbiosis Society Adya Veravdekar congratulated Irani on becoming the first woman HRD minister of cabinet rank in the country. "I do not view HRD from the prism of gender. I view HRD from the prism of possibilities," Irani responded.