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Minister Calls for Early Industry Linkages and Startup Mindset

Next Industrial Revolution Will Be Biotechnology-Driven, Says Jitendra Singh at IIT Roorkee Convocation

India's Growth Story Lies Beyond Metros: 50% of Startups Emerging from Smaller Towns, Highlights Jitendra Singh

In a highly scholarly Convocation address, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology; Earth Sciences and Minister of State for PMO, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr. Jitendra Singh today hailed IIT Roorkee, founded in 1847, as Asia's first Engineering College and a role model that combines research, innovation and societal engagement.

Even in the NIF rating released yesterday, the institution, which was earlier known as the University of Roorkee before it became IIT, was ranked no. 6 in the country, the Minister added.

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Delivering the convocation address as Chief Guest, Dr. Jitendra Singh said that IIT Roorkee's nearly 240 startups—out of 1.7 lakh across India—stand testimony to its significant contribution to the country's startup ecosystem. "Your nine centres of excellence, pioneering work in disaster risk, resilience and sustainability, and your deep engagement with local communities through initiatives like Vibrant Villages make you a true role model," he said, adding that the institute's location in the Himalayas makes its role critical not only in disaster response but also in what he termed a "peacetime calendar" of building resilience and growth.

The Minister pointed to IIT Roorkee's recognition on multiple platforms, noting that the institute has received the "Most Innovative Institute Award by the Confederation of Indian Industry" for the fourth year in a row, along with the "Gatishakti Achiever Award for Excellence of Women in STEM". He also congratulated the institute for securing the sixth position in the latest national rankings.

Dr. Jitendra Singh praised the leadership of Director Prof. Kamal Kishore Pant and Deputy Director Prof. U.P. Singh, alongside senior faculty, in steering the institute towards academic and research excellence. He also recalled the institution's legacy as India's oldest engineering college, which evolved into an IIT without having to seek the transformation, "a rare example of the stature and confidence it had earned over decades."

Placing IIT Roorkee's role in the larger national context, Dr. Jitendra Singh highlighted the government's futuristic initiatives in science and technology. He underscored India's rapid rise in the global startup landscape, now ranked third with 1.7 lakh registered ventures, and emphasized that nearly half of these come from smaller cities and towns. "This is a democratisation of opportunities, and institutions like IIT Roorkee can nurture this momentum," he said.

The Minister spoke of emerging opportunities in biotechnology, space, nuclear energy, and Himalayan resources, stressing that the next industrial revolution would be biotechnology-driven. He urged the institute to explore new domains such as biotechnology and regenerative processes while continuing its strengths in civil engineering and disaster management. He also pointed to recent government initiatives, including the Purple Revolution in lavender cultivation and new biotechnology policies under Bio-E³ (employment, environment, economy), as examples where academia and industry can work together.

Calling for early industry linkages and stronger public-private partnerships, Dr. Jitendra Singh encouraged graduating students to move beyond dependence on government or corporate jobs and instead become drivers of innovation-led enterprises. He reminded them that India's recent achievements in vaccine development, space exploration, and global innovation rankings were possible through a blend of government support, private initiative, and youth talent.

"You are born in the best of times," he told the graduating students. "Your destiny has given you this providential privilege, and I am sure you will make the best of the opportunities that India offers today."

The ceremony was attended by Chairperson of the Board of Governors Dr. B.V.R. Mohan Reddy, Director Prof. Kamal Kishore Pant, Deputy Director Prof. U.P. Singh, faculty members, and graduating students.





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