English rendering of PM's address at the Platinum Jubilee celebration of IIT Kharagpur

Posted On: 21 NOV 2026 1:02PM by PIB Delhi

Governor of West Bengal Shri R. N. Ravi ji, the popular Chief Minister here Shri Suvendu Adhikari ji, my colleague in the Union Cabinet Shri Sukanta Majumdar ji, Minister in the State Government Brother Jagannath Chattopadhyay ji, respected Shri T. V. Narendran ji of IIT Kharagpur, Shri Suman Chakravarti ji, students, alumni members, other distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

First of all, I seek your forgiveness because I was delayed in arriving. Due to the weather, I could not reach on time, and then we travelled by road, but even then there was a delay. You had to wait for me, and for the inconvenience caused to all of you, I sincerely apologise.

Friends,

At this Platinum Jubilee celebration of IIT Kharagpur, I see before me India’s past, India’s present, and India’s future, all connected together. A very talented and highly aspirational generation is present here. Today, all of us have gathered to celebrate the 75-year journey of this institution and to honour its legacy. In the 75 years since its establishment, IIT Kharagpur has created many milestones. And in these 75 years, India has witnessed change from bullock carts to bullet trains, from postal letters to social media messages. In every phase of these transformations, as the country’s first IIT, IIT Kharagpur has played an important role. On this occasion, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all the students, faculty members, staff, and alumni of IIT Kharagpur.

Friends,

Some memories of life at IIT Kharagpur stay with you forever. I am sure that many alumni here must still fondly remember discussions over tea at Chedis even after decades. Other institutions have hostels, but here you have Halls. And I know how proud every student is of their Hall. Before coming here, I was shown photographs of Diwali, and all of you have just celebrated it. I have been told that Diwali at IIT Kharagpur has a special excitement of its own. The illumination here has its own unique charm, and the competition among

different Halls makes it even more special. Which Hall won this year? Look at how proudly they are saying it. Congratulations to the winners. If the winners themselves do not clap, then who else will clap for them?

Friends,

This land of Bengal is the land where ideas found strength, where national movements were born. And this institution stands on a site that was once a detention camp for freedom fighters. Just imagine what those freedom fighters who were held here must have discussed throughout the day. What thoughts must have occupied their minds? Their lives, their thinking, and their activities from that period must still resonate in the atmosphere here like a mantra, inspiring all of you. Decades ago, these detention camps witnessed the indomitable spirit and courage of Indians who wanted self-rule and wanted to see India reach great heights. Today, on the same land, our IIT, transformed into a new and vibrant institution, is producing young people whose innovations and ideas are becoming the strength of an Atmanirbhar Bharat. This land, which once aspired for self-rule, now reflects a resolve for self-reliance. Then there was a dream of freedom; today there is an opportunity to build the future. This journey from aspiration to self-reliance is the true energy behind the making of a Developed India.

Friends,

When IIT Kharagpur began its journey, India had only recently become independent. The country had not even held its first general election. At that time, India needed engineers for its industries and infrastructure. As the nation's scientific capabilities expanded, graduates from here contributed to our space and atomic energy programmes. Then came the age of information technology and new opportunities in the global economy. The young people who emerged from this institution strengthened India's software industry and played important roles in leading major global companies. In every era, this institution has stepped forward and fulfilled its responsibility in nation-building. And today, when we are moving ahead with the goal of a Developed India, the experience accumulated by IIT Kharagpur over 75 years will play a major role in the country's development and innovation profile. I am confident that you will leave no stone unturned in fulfilling the dreams of today's Aspirational India.

Friends,

Our true capability is determined by how courageously we challenge challenges. People often ask me about challenges. I tell them that it is in my nature that I cannot remain without challenging a challenge.

Friends,

The question is whether we challenge challenges or whether we become satisfied too quickly and sit down. Often, some people place limits on their own thinking. They define boundaries for themselves. This is what is called limiting beliefs. And what are limiting beliefs? Limiting beliefs are limiting your dreams. Limiting beliefs are limiting your talent. Limiting beliefs are limiting the capabilities of your country. We ourselves decide what is possible and what is not. Most people begin with, "No, this cannot happen." Those who live with such dead thinking cannot truly live life, my friends. We end up treating the limits of our thinking as the limits of our world.

Friends,

Nations also recognise their capabilities only when they break the limits of their thinking. And India has demonstrated exactly this in recent years. India declared with confidence: Break the Limits. Unlock the Possibilities. Let me give you some examples. Think about it. Until around twenty years ago, poverty in our country was considered a permanent problem. Five decades ago, slogans about removing poverty were raised from the Red Fort. But whenever anything had to be done at the policy level after that, the entire system would simply prepare files and sit on them.

Friends,

That happened because everyone believed that poverty could never be removed. “The population is too large, things will always remain like this.” Nobody even showed the courage to implement the right policies for eliminating poverty.

Friends,

When we came to government, the situation was still the same. I said from the Red Fort that I would build toilets for the poor. People in Parliament made fun of it. They said, “What kind of Prime Minister is this, speaking about building toilets from the Red Fort?” Such people could not understand how important a toilet is for a poor family, for poor mothers and sisters. Because of such thinking, the entire country remained deprived of many basic facilities. During the last 12 years, we changed this mindset. We empowered the poor. Power to Empower has been the guiding principle of my life. We empowered them. We launched schemes for their ease of living. And today the country can see the results. You must have read or heard about the recent World Bank report. The World Bank has said that within just 12–13 years, 50 crore people in India have come out of poverty.

Friends,

This is not a small change. It is the result of a mindset that says: Break the Limits.

Friends,

Let me give you another example. When I launched the semiconductor mission, many questions were raised. “Why do we need this mission now? Other countries are already making semiconductors. Semiconductors have been made around the world for the past 50 years. What will we gain by manufacturing semiconductors now?” This is the limitation of thinking.

Friends,

You may be surprised to know that fifty years ago a company had come to India to manufacture semiconductors. But it was effectively shown the red flag and sent back. I know nobody is going to clap for that. That was the work of those waving red flags. And when I spoke about the semiconductor mission, people again said that it was already too late.

Friends,

But I was determined. I said, “Even if it is late, should India continue sitting idle?” We began. I personally worked with officials to prepare plans. And today, within just four years, many semiconductor facilities have been established in the country. India has begun

exporting chips. Many of your alumni are running and leading these facilities. They are providing leadership and execution. And believe me, there are opportunities everywhere for you. From chips to ships, everything will be made here, and it will be done by young people like you. But just imagine, if we had accepted the idea that others were already doing it and we should not even try, none of this would have happened.

Friends,

Let me give another strong example, the space sector. Earlier, we had a limited platform in ISRO, where entry itself was highly restricted. Any launch or new mission had to go through a rigid system. Young people outside ISRO did not even get opportunities. I told the ministry that our young innovators must get a chance in this sector. We opened India's space sector to India's youth. And today, look at what has happened. An alumnus of IIT Kharagpur, Pawan, through Skyroot Aerospace, gave India the distinction of launching its first private rocket. Today many such space startups are taking India's space programme forward at a new pace. Once these things seemed impossible. Today they are possible. Today they are reality. And I can proudly say that your alumni have made a major contribution in turning the impossible into the possible.

Friends,

The country has high expectations from all of you. The next two decades will be among the most productive years of your lives. By 2047, many of you will be in leadership positions. These years will also be the most decisive years for India's development. Therefore, every success of yours will be important for the nation. You must always ask yourselves: which challenge before the country would you like to help solve? Remember my mantra, friends: Nation First. When you move forward with this mindset, it will certainly create new opportunities for you and bring great benefits to the country as well.

Friends,

You have done outstanding work over the past 75 years. Now you must move forward with the determination that when IIT Kharagpur celebrates its 100th year, it should do so in a Developed India. In the years 1925–27, the freedom fighters imprisoned on this very land took a pledge that they would achieve independence, and within twenty years they did. Today, let us take a pledge from this same place that within twenty years we will build a Developed India. We will do it. And for this, we will devote ourselves completely and work tirelessly. And since I am on the soil of Bengal today, I will conclude with the words of Swami Vivekananda: Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached. Once again, on this special occasion, I extend my heartfelt best wishes to all of you.

Thank you very much.

Namaskar.

DISCLAIMER: This is the approximate translation of Prime Minister's address. Original address was delivered in Hindi.

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