



Address

BY

Shri A. K. SAIKIA

**Chairman
Board of Governors**

AT

**THE 6th CONVOCATION OF
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY GUWAHATI
MAY 29, 2004**

His Excellency the Vice-President of India, Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, Director of IIT Guwahati Prof. Gautam Barua, members of the Board of Governors, members of the Senate, faculty, staff, graduating students, parents, guardians, ladies and gentlemen.

As Chairman of the Board of Governors, I am privileged to extend to you all a warm welcome to the 6th Convocation of IIT Guwahati.

I would especially like to welcome your excellency, the Vice-President of India, Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat and on behalf of the Board of Governors of the Institute, express gratitude to you for accepting our request to grace this occasion as the Chief Guest and to deliver the convocation address. I am sure, your august presence and valuable words will enthuse our graduating students and inspire them towards a better future.

IIT Guwahati will complete ten years in September this year. It is gratifying to note that the Institute has made steady progress during this period. It has established all the major academic programmes and the basic infrastructure is almost in place. Today, IIT Guwahati is firmly established as one of the family of IITs. All this has been possible due to the sincerity and dedication of the employees for which I compliment the Director, all the members of the faculty, the staff and the students.

There is, however, always scope for improvement, for crossing new frontiers and for becoming better. There is now need for a phase of consolidation to bring depth to the programmes that have been established. The recent acquisition of sophisticated instruments and the expansion of the faculty strength are part of this phase. The number of research and development projects has increased as has the number of research scholars. However, there is also need to accelerate growth particularly in student strength. By July this year, there will be about 1300 students. With the addition of hostels that have been planned, I am confident that the institute will be able to meet its target of a student strength of 2800 by the year 2007, at the end of the Tenth Five Year Plan. Along with this there will be growth in faculty (with 1:10 faculty-student ratio), growth in staff (with 1:1.5 faculty-staff ratio) and of course growth in infrastructure.

The construction programme of the Institute, which has been hampered due to the difficult terrain, is being accelerated. The Board has approved a construction programme covering an auditorium, a lecture hall complex,

a number of students' hostels, a married students' hostel, a swimming pool, and an expansion of the residential complex.

I hope this combination of consolidation and growth will help further the progress of the institute towards greater heights.

IIT Guwahati is a national Institute. Its aim is to be recognized as one of the best technical Institutes globally. This cannot be achieved without the Institute giving adequate attention to issues and challenges of the local environment.

The North Eastern Region of India is one of the less developed parts of the country. IIT Guwahati can play a pivotal role by providing technical inputs for its development. The Department of Biotechnology along with inputs from the Departments of Chemistry, Chemical Engineering, Civil Engineering and from inter-disciplinary centres that are being proposed can play a key role in preserving and exploiting the rich bio-diversity of the North East. The Department of Civil Engineering is already working on projects related to natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes which are recurrent in this part of the country. Local resources such as bamboo, textiles, fruits, need infusion of new ideas so that traditional technologies can be upgraded. The Departments of Design, Mechanical Engineering and Civil Engineering have undertaken a number of projects related to this aspect. Much more, however, needs to be done. Other areas that need attention are roads and transport, communication, hydro-electric power generation, rain water harvesting, river navigation, fisheries, dairy farming and sustainable development of the green resources. Efforts can also be directed towards technological innovations in the well established tea and oil industries of the region.

In conclusion, I visualize IIT Guwahati with its young and energetic faculty and staff contributing in a wide spectrum of areas not only in science and technology but also in other disciplines like management, humanities and social sciences. I hope our high-calibre students and researchers will cross the peripheries of existing knowledge and will add edge to the emerging areas of study and research.

Young graduates, this convocation is a turning point in your career and now you are on the threshold of a new life full of challenges. I am confident that with the knowledge that you have acquired in your Alma Mater you will be able to meet all these challenges. I congratulate you and wish you the very best.

Finally, once again I would like to thank His Excellency the Vice-President of India, Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat for his kind presence.

Jai Hind.