



Address

of

Shri A. K. SAIKIA

**Chairman
Board of Governors**

AT

**The Seventh Convocation of
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY GUWAHATI
Monday, May 30, 2005**

Honourable Minister of Human Resource Development, Shri Arjun Singh, Honourable Chief Minister of Assam, Shri Tarun Gogoi, 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 7th Convocation of IIT Guwahati.

I would especially like to welcome the Minister of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India, Shri Arjun Singh. I, on behalf of the Board of Governors of the Institute express gratitude to you, sir, for accepting our request to grace this occasion as the Chief Guest and to deliver the convocation address. I am sure, sir, your august presence and valuable words will enthuse our graduating students and inspire them towards a better future. Your role in the establishment of this IIT and your support to this Institute will always be dear to us.

I would also like to welcome the Chief Minister of Assam, Shri Tarun Gogoi. Sir, we thank you for accepting to grace this function as a Guest of Honour. We are grateful for the support extended by you and the Govt. of Assam to IIT Guwahati over the years.

IIT Guwahati will complete eleven years in September this year. During this period, the Institute has made steady progress. It is gratifying to note that today our Institute is recognized as an important member of the IIT family. The scenic beauty of our campus is unique. All this has been possible due to the sincerity and dedication of the employees of the Institute for which I compliment the Director, the members of the faculty, the staff and the students.

Ours is a growing Institute. We continue to lay great emphasis on the development of infrastructure. Despite problems caused by heavy rains and the low lying nature of our land, the progress of construction and quality of work have been largely satisfactory. The Institute has planned its activities and the pace of work has picked up as the basic infrastructure has been put in place. Three hostels of 500 capacity each were planned in 2003, and 250 rooms of the first hostel will be completed by July this year. Land filling work of the other two hostels has also been completed, and construction work will start from November this year. By the end of the tenth plan period, therefore, the Institute will have a student capacity of 2800. The Board has been monitoring the progress of the building up of the infrastructure, and we are confident that the goal will be fulfilled.

Faculty growth is a major thrust area for a new Institute like this. This year, as a result of our vigorous efforts, we could recruit 30 new faculty members. Despite the handicap of not having enough candidates from the region, and despite the perception of remoteness of the region by hinterland India, this growth has taken place. I can assure you that there has been no compromise on quality in the process. However, the sobering reality is that the faculty of the Institute needs to grow to a strength of 280 in another two years, which is a challenging target. The Institute is trying to meet the situation in a number of ways. It has recruited a number of Scientific Officers to help in research activities.

The Institute is emphasising increased use of Information Technology tools to provide material as supplements to teaching. The all-India project of Technology Enhanced Learning will, I am confident, help by providing web based course material.

I have always been interested in seeing how IIT Guwahati can contribute to the development of the North-eastern region. Last year I mentioned the following areas where IIT Guwahati could make an impact: preserving and exploiting the region's biodiversity, water resources and earthquakes, upgradation of technologies for local resources, roads and transport, communication, hydro-electric power generation, river navigation, dairy farming, and sustainable development of the green resources. The Institute has, I am glad to state, made contributions in some of these areas. The Institute is participating in the all-India programme on Earthquake Engineering. The institute is involved in a KVIC project through which work in the areas of biogas, bamboo and cane craft and loom has been taken up. The work on improving the productivity of bell metal industry of Hajo cluster has also been undertaken. E-Dictionaries and Corpora have been developed in Assamese and Manipuri languages. IIT Guwahati has been helping various educational Institutions in the region by way of providing support for laboratory development, curriculum development, short-term courses etc. I am aware that the people and the institutes in the region have high expectations from IIT Guwahati. I am confident that the faculty and staff have been doing their best despite limited time availability and I hope to find more such action oriented programmes in the future.

In conclusion, I would like to see IIT Guwahati progressing ever faster towards its goal of becoming a world-class Institute of learning and research. I would also like to see it expanding its role as a harbinger of technological and economic changes in this region.

Young Graduates, this convocation is an important milestone in your career. Now you will embark on a new journey to meet all the challenges that may come before you. I hope you will carry with you good memories of the time you spent at this Institute.

Finally, once again I would like to thank the Honourable Minister of Human Resource Development, Shri Arjun Singh, and the Honourable Chief Minister of Assam, Shri Tarun Gogoi for gracing this occasion with their presence.

Jai Hind

(A K Saikia)

Chairman, Board of Governors

IIT Guwahati