



ADDRESS

OF

SHRI A. K. SAIKIA

**CHAIRMAN
BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

AT

**THE 8TH CONVOCATION OF
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY GUWAHATI
FRIDAY, 26 MAY 2006**

Chief Guest, Prof. M.G.K. Menon, Director Prof. Gautam Barua, Members of the Board of Governors, members of the Senate, faculty and staff, graduating students, parents, guardians, ladies and gentlemen. As the Chairman of the Board of Governors, it is my pleasant duty to extend to you all a warm welcome to the 8th Convocation of IIT Guwahati.

I consider it a privilege that I have been associated with this young institute for the last three years and have seen it grow steadily into an important member of the IIT family. The Director, the faculty and staff and the students deserve special praise for their contribution in bringing up this institution.

IIT Guwahati has just completed twelve years. Although the major academic programmes and the basic infrastructure are already in place, there is a need for vigorous and sustained efforts to take the institute to greater heights. Rapid expansion of infrastructure and academic resources, therefore, continues to be our highest priority. I am very happy that the long pending railway overbridge is now ready and the approach road to the institute has finally been opened. Another set of activity that deserves mention relates to the Indoor Sports Stadium and other sports facilities which are expected to be completed very soon to enable us to host the Inter IIT Sports Meet this year.

The Institute is also making good strides in augmenting its academic resources. We have introduced a new integrated MSc programme in Chemistry. We are soon going to introduce BTech programmes in Engineering Physics, and in Mathematics and Computing. Interactions with other Universities and R&D organisations are on the rise. A number of MOUs have been signed formalising some of these relationships. Another welcome trend is that the faculty from other organisations are taking up visiting assignments in our institute. One faculty came from IIT Bombay, another from Australia, and a third is due to come from the USA. The number of research papers has gone up and several new R&D projects having direct relevance to the benefit of the society have been taken up. A number of International Conferences were organised in the Institute this year. With the improvement in our infrastructure, I am sure such events will increase even more in the years to come.

While our goal is to reach the highest international level, we are conscious of our responsibility to the issues and challenges of the local environment. In fact, I have been emphasising all along how this IIT can play a pivotal role in the development and growth of this underdeveloped region. The unique location of this Institute has made it an ideal platform for interface of technology and society. Northeast is a natural laboratory where many

advanced technologies can be utilized to address local problems of a naturally endowed yet undeveloped territory. The emphasis is to produce technologies locally to fulfill both regional and national needs. We need new technologies for the petroleum sector, the tea industry, for disaster mitigation and to conserve our rich biodiversity. While we must derive the best out of our natural resources, we also have to make efforts to close the digital divide of the Northeast region. We have to ensure increased reach and benefits of the critical electronic tools in this region considering its vulnerability to repeated natural calamities.

The role of IIT Guwahati assumes even greater importance in the context of globalisation and the recent emphasis on "Look East Policy". We are in a position to be one of the most important vehicles of collaboration and cooperation for science and technology. We must be ready when opportunities will knock at our door from the countries of Southeast Asia and the Far East. For this purpose there is a need to forge alliances with leading organisations and institutions of these countries. In this context, I am happy to note that IIT Guwahati has a joint research collaboration with NICT Japan on next generation wireless networks.

An IIT degree today is a license to a whole new world of infinite possibilities. You must try to make the best use of this hard earned privilege and live up to the responsibilities that go with it. In conclusion, I would like to congratulate you all once again. Be a proud torch bearer of IIT Guwahati wherever you go and bring laurels to your Alma Mater. I do hope that one day some of you would return to this Institute and contribute towards making it a true world class institute. Thank you.

Jai Hind

(A.K. Saikia)

Chairman, Board of Governors
IIT Guwahati