



**ADDRESS**  
**OF**  
**DR. M. K. BHAN**  
**CHAIRMAN**  
**BOARD OF GOVERNORS**  
**AT**

**THE 10<sup>TH</sup> CONVOCATION OF**  
**INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY GUWAHATI**  
**FRIDAY, 23 MAY 2008**

Distinguished Chief Guest; His Excellency, Lt. Gen (Retd.) Ajai Singh, the Governor of Assam; Director, Professor Gautam Barua; Members of the Board of Governors; members of the Senate; faculty and staff; graduating students; parents; guardians; ladies and gentlemen. As Chairman, Board of Governors I extend my greetings and a warm welcome to all of you to the tenth Convocation of IIT Guwahati.

Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati has over the years grown as an important member of the IIT family. The Director, the faculty, staff and students deserve accolades for their sustained efforts towards the progress of the Institute.

It has been my utmost privilege to be associated with IIT Guwahati for the last one and half years. It is inspiring to see the rapid growth and expansion of the Institute and I feel elated to be a part of this progress.

IIT Guwahati is about to complete fourteen years of its existence. Although the major academic programmes and infrastructure are already in place, there is still a need for vigorous and sustained efforts to take the institute to even greater heights. Rapid expansion of infrastructure and academic resources, therefore, continues to be our highest priority. I am very happy that the construction of important buildings like the Lecture Hall Complex, the Auditorium Building in which we are holding the institute Convocation for the first time, the Kendriya Vidyalaya School building, two Community halls, Boys' Hostel No. 6 named Barak and the Married Scholars' Hostel have been completed. The work related to the main Approach Road from NH-31 to IIT Guwahati Campus including the 4-lane Railway Over-Bridge have also been completed. Some important ongoing construction works that deserve mention are Boys' Hostel No. 7 and 8, Extension of Girls' Hostel, additional F-type, E-type, D-type and C-type residential Quarters and the Central Workshop Building.

The Institute is progressing very well in academic resources as well. From July 2007, it has started three more specialized MTech Courses in Environmental Engineering, and Transportation Systems Engineering in the Department of Civil

Engineering and Computer Assisted Manufacturing in the Department of Mechanical Engineering. A Masters Degree Programme of the Design Department (MDes) has also been started from July 2007. It is also proposed to start a new M-Tech course in Bio-Technology from July 2008.

Interactions with other Universities and Research and Development organizations are on the rise. A number of new MOUs have been signed. Last year, MOUs were signed with the Ecole Centrale Nantes, France; Oil India Ltd., Duliajan; Army Technology Board; and Reseau "N+i", France. A number of Faculty members from other organizations accepted visiting assignments to our Institute. A series of National and International Conferences and capacity building courses were organized over the last year. It is a matter of great satisfaction that the number of such scientific and academic congregation is constantly and rapidly growing in the Institute.

While our goal is to reach the highest international level of education and research, we are also conscious of our responsibility to the issues and challenges of the local society and environment. IIT Guwahati is conscious that it can play a pivotal role in the development and growth of the North-eastern Region. We need new technologies for the petroleum industry, the tea industry, and for disaster mitigation; and IIT Guwahati is constantly endeavouring to contribute in these fields too. The role of IIT Guwahati assumes even greater importance in the context of globalization and the emphasis on the "Look East Policy". We are in a position to be one of the most important vehicles of collaboration and cooperation for science and technology. Therefore, we must tap the opportunities knocking 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 organizations of these countries.

IITs are well-known centres of academic excellence though we are yet to go a long way in our research output to catch up with other leading institutes of the world. The biggest challenge is that the IITs must emerge as globally important centres of R&D activities. We have to attract and guide young minds for seminal research in basic

sciences, technology and social sciences including their inter-disciplinary prospects. A close collaboration between the Academia and the Industry and with peer Institutes of the world is a mandatory pre-requisite to enable and further cutting edge research.

IIT Guwahati indeed can play a leading role in scientific and technological innovation of the country. I foresee some key research areas where our immediate research efforts may be directed.

**Biotechnology Research:** Fundamental research is needed in all the areas of Biotechnology. We should give importance to areas like plant biotechnology, discovery of new drugs and drug delivery systems. IITG may be instrumental in harnessing the rich bioresources of North east India.

**Water power management:** The efficient management of the water resources is the call of the day. Our research initiatives may be directed towards the control of flood, irrigation, drainage and harnessing the water power as whole. IIT Guwahati may offer the technological know-how in sustainably managing the great Brahmaputra and in harnessing its mammoth resource for the all round development of the region.

**Earthquake Engineering:** India, particularly the North East, is highly prone to seismic hazards. Earthquakes throughout the ages have shown our vulnerability to its impacts. Our construction technologies need to be improved to prevent or mitigate these impacts.

**Energy:** Considering the growing demand for energy, the research on efficient utilization of energy resources like biofuel and solar energy is very vital. Such research calls for co-ordination among multiple disciplines including the environmental ramifications – as the current food grain crisis has indicated. The Institute may give thrust to research on processing of petro-chemicals considering

its location in a state that contributes to substantial portion of the countries need for petroleum products.

**Computer and Communication Technology:** We have witnessed the information and communication technology revolution which has become possible because of the tremendous development in electronic hardware and communication and computer technologies. The telecommunication sector may be a major thrust with the growing application of broad-band communication and enormous scope for ultra-wide-band communication. We may put our effort to bring the internet facilities to the masses through local languages like Assamese, Manipuri, etc.

Finally I would like to emphasize that the integration of emerging technological innovations in seeking solutions to the pressing problems faced by the disadvantaged sections of the society should always remain a priority for IIT Guwahati, while constantly thriving to reach the frontiers of science and technological research at a global level – which should indeed continue to be the pinnacle of success for any institute of our kind.

An IIT degree today is a license to a whole new world of infinite possibilities. The graduating students must try to make the best of this hard earned privilege and live up to the responsibilities that go with it. In conclusion, I would like to congratulate all of you once again. Be a proud torchbearer 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 IIT Guwahati and contribute towards making it a true world class Institute. Thank you.

Jai Hind.

(Dr. M.K. Bhan)

Chairman, Board of Governors

IITGuwahati