

**SPEECH OF SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE,  
FORMER PRESIDENT OF INDIA ON THE  
OCASSION OF THE 12TH CONVOCATION OF  
ICFAI UNIVERSITY**

**(Video Message)**

At the outset, I would like to express my sincere regrets for not being able to address you in person. But for some unavoidable and unforeseen circumstances, I was unable to come to the beautiful and pristine state of Sikkim and see your campus.

2. I am indeed happy to be addressing the 12<sup>th</sup> Convocation of the Institute of Chartered Financial Analysts of India (ICFAI) University, Sikkim. To begin with, I wish to congratulate the young graduates on their Convocation. This day marks a great achievement for each one of you as well as your parents, family, teachers and friends.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies & Gentlemen,

3. Convocation is a red-letter day in the academic calendar of a University. It marks the culmination of a phase of learning and symbolizes the beginning of a new journey - where knowledge and skills acquired will be put to test. There will be times when you will find success easily and times when you will face adversity. The trying moments will test your true mettle. Your hard work, discipline, commitment and determination will help you navigate through the rough terrains. And I am sure your alma mater has prepared you well for the same.

4. The role of a university in the life of a student has been eloquently described by Dr. Rajendra Prasad. I quote: "***A university is or should be an artist's studio where not clay or stone or wood has to be moulded or cut or chiseled into shape, but where human beings with different temperaments, varying capacities, changing moods, and limitless variety of what may be called hereditary tendencies or sanskaras have to be put not only***

***into beautiful shape, but also rendered into useful instruments that can serve others, and what is more, serve themselves well. The product has to be not only accomplished gentlemen, but also truly useful and serviceable members of society, and loyal, helpful and sacrificing citizens of a country”*** (unquote).

Dear Students,

5. You have had the benefit of a progressive education system. The very fact that you are a part of this congregation today is succinct testimony of the same. As per the All India Survey on Higher Education the Gross Enrollment Ratio for University Level Education of India in 2017-18 is 25.8%. Thus it will not be incorrect to say that you are among the fortunate few who have had access to University Level education in our nation. You all are the next generation of leaders, policy makers, managers, educationalists, law makers of India. Your future is intertwined with the future of this country. It is you who is destined to chart the future growth of our country. This responsibility that

lies on your shoulders is enormous. And this is exactly the time when your innovative and creative thoughts and ideas will be put to use. It is the time when you are energetic and enthusiastic and if this potential is used in the right direction it can lead to the nation's rapid progress.

6. As you now enter a stage where you can give back to the society, make your contribution and make it count. You are all capable and intelligent minds. Do all that is necessary to realize our country's goal. For India to sit at the high table of global powers, it has to prepare for an ever-shrinking world that shares resources as well as responsibilities through being knowledgeable, capable and sensitive to environmental and social issues. Universities, like yours, will need to reinvent themselves as enablers of society rather than gatekeepers of higher education.

7. To that end, I am happy to note that the ICFAI University, Sikkim aims to offer innovative, career-

oriented professional post graduate and undergraduate programs through inclusive technology - aided pedagogies to equip students with the requisite professional and life skills as well as social sensitivity and high sense of ethics. I am told that the University strives to create an intellectually stimulating environment for Research, particularly into areas bearing on the socio- economic and cultural development of the state and the nation. More and more such initiatives are needed for the developing world to understand each other and their special capabilities, creating space for new thinking in climate change and sustainability.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies & Gentlemen,

8. I am also happy and humbled to learn that the PMF has set-up the “**Pranab Mukherjee Chair for Sustainable Development, Research and Education**” at The ICFAI University, Sikkim with the objective of promoting sustainable development, research and consultancy projects to strengthen

democracy and promote peace harmony and happiness in the North East region of India. This initiative will support in creating and dissemination of innovation, knowledge and novelty that will improve the quality of life in rural and semi-urban areas of Sikkim and North-East Region through skill development, research and education.

9. On this occasion, I would also like to address the faculty of this Institution and through you, all the teachers, guides and mentors of our nation. I was a teacher before I joined public life hence I can say that I know how satisfying it is for a teacher to give students the joy of learning; to make them appreciate, reflect and differentiate the strands of thinking; to make them worthy and willing to shoulder responsibility. The faculty is the lifeblood of a university. And they must continuously renew their understanding of the subject. They must be able to transfer knowledge to their students with dedication and commitment. They must act as friend and guide

to the students, ever willing to counsel and show them how best they can gear themselves to face the world. I wish to compliment the entire academic fraternity of ICFAI University for their selfless labour at preparing the students to face the test of life.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies & Gentlemen,

10. The state of Sikkim with 82.20% literacy rate (Census 2011), is way above the average literacy rate of the nation. In fact, the Northeastern states of Mizoram and Tripura, stand at places 3 and 4, with 91.58 and 87.75% literacy rate, respectively. These figures itself speak volumes about the wealth of educational landscape in the North-eastern region of the country. I believe, the north-eastern region is not only brimming with potential but is now realizing it too. I have had the good fortune to visit a few Universities and institutes of higher learning in this region during my Presidency. And I can say with confidence that the more we harness the creativity of the North-East, the

greater the benefit that we will be able to derive for the development of this region and the country.

11. With these words I Congratulate the graduands on adding another feather in your cap! May the success that has come your way today lead you to bigger achievements in the years to come!

**Thank You**

**Jai Hind!**