

SPEECH OF SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE, FORMER PRESIDENT OF INDIA FOR YOUNG INDIANS – (KOLKATA) ANNUAL DAY PROGRAMME

I am happy to be present amongst you all for ‘**PRISM**’ – the Young Indians Annual Day, 2018, organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

2. Formed in the year 2002 with an objective to create a platform for young business leaders and professionals to come together, Yi, I am informed, currently has around 2600 direct members in 40 chapters, and engages around 15000 students through *chaupals*, under the brand ‘Yuva’. I am happy to know that their aim is not just to network and learn from each other but also to give back to society by way of supporting various national social initiatives. I am also told that Yi is the only Youth organization which was recognized by the Government of India's “Startup India, Standup India campaign”, apart from being the country's foremost youth organization representing India at the G20Y, CAAYE summits. The efforts made by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) to promote

entrepreneurship amongst the youth through Young Indians, is indeed commendable.

3. The theme of today's event – '**Look Within**', is significantly interesting. I think it is important in more ways than one for the youth in today's context of rapid globalization. Not only must we look within our own nation to find solution for the many social challenges faced by our people; we must also look within our own selves to become the leaders of change that our nation requires.

4. As India moves to become the youngest country by 2020, with over 64% of the population in the working age group, the importance of Youth in India cannot be understated. The strength, the boundless energy and most importantly, the potential that the youth in our country have, will lead India on the path of fast economic growth in the coming decade. This advantage of age is what Demographic Dividend entails.

5. Youth, today, are brimming with ideas, energy, and enthusiasm. Coupled with the benefits of technology, there

is no limit to what they can achieve through lofty 'dreams'. With the right guidance and opportunity, I believe, that the youth of our nation can make significant contribution in every field for the growth of the nation. For this I am happy to note that Young Indians focuses on the three tenets of "Youth Leadership", "Nation Building" and "International Engagements" for their guided development.

6. It is our utmost priority to equip our youth with skills for self-development and inculcate in them the values of humanity. Our education must be primary focused on nurturing students into confident, socially conscious and able individuals. This education is not restricted to academic institutions; it comes from everywhere – family, friends and socio economic institutions and organizations among others. Education from life is the best education. It is the responsibility of organizations like yours to inculcate and foster gainful employment, active engagement with the community and empathetic response to the concerns of the society by effectively channelizing their desire to address these issues. Corporate Social Responsibility may be one effective instrument at their hands. It is encouraging to see Young Indians (YI) playing an instrumental role in developing the youth of the nation and

sensitizing the youth in areas of education, empowerment of women and child, ecological sustainability, etc.

7. A major hurdle in the development of our nation is the pace of growth in remote and rural parts of the country. In this regard, associations like Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) have to constantly work towards fostering entrepreneurship that generates employment in the remotest parts of the country through its Young Indians initiative. To expand the reach of such initiatives and to make them more impactful, it is also important to build a convergence between various public and private entities. We want growth with creation of jobs especially in rural areas.

Dear Friends,

8. To my mind, Innovation is the surest means today for emerging economies to have better growth and it is also the greatest pull for developed economies to stay ahead. Innovation, in short, is central to the growth of capital and also the answer to the problems faced by our rural economy. I exhort the “Young Indians” group to think in the direction of supporting and sustaining innovation in rural India through their initiatives. It goes

without saying that, strengthening our business ecosystem is vital for a brighter future of the next generation and to enhance our competitive advantage in this extremely globalised world.

Thank You
Jai Hind