

**SPEECH BY THE PRRESIDENT OF INDIA,  
SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE AT THE PRESENTATION OF  
NATIONAL GEOSCIENCE AWARDS 2014**

**Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi : 5 APRIL 2016**

1. I am indeed very happy to be present amidst you to present the National Geoscience Awards for the year 2014. This is an opportunity for us to honor individuals and teams of scientists for their outstanding achievements and contributions in the field of fundamental and applied geosciences, mining and allied areas. I congratulate all of you on your success and achievements.
2. I must emphasize that as Geoscientists, your contributions to the economy and environment are immense. Over the years, the society has made advancements in various fields ranging from agriculture, industry, infrastructure, electronics and energy to space technology through the innovative use of materials sourced from our mother earth. We cannot imagine our world today without the use of natural resources. Availability and use of minerals in any country has been one of the factors determining self-sufficiency of its economy. These natural resources have to be explored, extracted, refined and processed to use them for national building. At the same time, we must understand that sustenance of mankind depends only on environmentally sustainable mining practices. Our effort to use our natural resources should be informed by the dangers of natural and manmade disasters. You as scientists, have the responsibility to create greater awareness about the importance of conservation and sustainability. I am happy to note that the Geoscientists of the country are working hard to meet these challenges. The diverse fields work of the awardees are testimony to this inherent spread of the geoscientific developments in the country.
3. It is heartening to note that this initiative of the Ministry of Mines gives recognition not only to the accomplishments of contemporary geoscientists; it also acknowledges lifelong involvement of individuals to the dedicated cause of advancement of geosciences. The two categories of awards, that is, 'Award for Excellence' and the 'Young Scientist Award', will serve as a great encouragement to those who pursue these disciplines with passion. The awardees with us today represent the entire spectrum of geoscientific community - the National Organizations, Research Institutions and the Academic Institutes. This bears testimony to the fact that geoscience in the country is being practiced across the community with passion and dedication. The honour associated with these awards has inspired the geoscientific community to strive to reach the highest standards of scientific achievements.

4. India will be the proud host to the 36<sup>th</sup> International Geological Congress (IGC) in the year 2020. The IGC will be hosted in the Indian sub-continent after a gap of 56 years and will be an excellent opportunity for you to showcase your work to the global geoscience community. I am sure the Indian geoscientific community will rise to the occasion and we will also see significant contribution from them in this global geoscientific Olympiad.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. Today, India stands at the threshold of a new horizon. The technological progress the country has achieved in recent times has been phenomenal. At the same time, the expectations from the geoscientific community to continue their good work have also increased many folds. The goals have to be set high and persistent efforts are required to achieve them.
6. The exploration of mineral resources in the country requires a greater thrust with an even greater caution. As the search for the near surface deposits have reached a point of saturation, the geoscientists of the country now face the crucial challenge of finding deep seated and concealed mineral resources. There is a need to focus on exploration of the offshore mineral resources which hold enormous potential of supplementing the increasing needs of the society. Similarly, it is also important to find strategic and rare earth elements to support Space and Information Technology Missions of the Nation to ensure self-reliance of the Nation in these fields. However, all of this needs to be accomplished with the environmental sustainability concern in mind. I am sure, you all will take up the challenge and bring about innovative ways to unravel the concealed treasure.
7. Today, the mining industry in the country is undergoing reforms introduced through investor friendly interventions of the Government of India. The Mines & Minerals (Development & Regulation) Amendment Act, 2015 has introduced transparent and competitive auctioning process for grant of mineral concessions. This will also enable the States to get an enhanced share of the value of mineral resources. Provisions have been made to ensure certainty of tenure and easy transferability of mineral concession. To accelerate mineral exploration activity in the country, a National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET) has been set up.
8. Large parts of the country have already become water stressed. Given the limits on enhancing the availability of utilizable water resources and increased variability in supplies due to climate change, meeting the future needs will depend more on demand management. Therefore, a holistic and inter-disciplinary approach at water related problems is required.

9. One of the most important ways in which earth science contributes to society is through an appreciation of natural hazards and their consequences. Hazard profiles have changed dramatically in recent years, due to changes in both our perception of geological hazards with long recurrence times, as well as actual changes driven by climate change. The potential consequences are also changing rapidly. The rising population and urbanization is leading to increased concentrations of vulnerable people in areas exposed to natural hazards. The Geoscientists have to respond to challenges by devising new, actionable strategies to increase the resilience of the vulnerable communities from natural disasters and risks related with climate change.

Dear Awardees,

10. This proud moment for you is the result of your years of dedication and commendable work in the sphere of geosciences. You will agree, this would not have been possible without support and cooperation from your families and dear ones whose sacrifices have ensured your continued, undivided attention to the subject. I extend my heartiest appreciation to all those who have tirelessly worked in advancing the frontiers of scientific knowledge and its application towards nation building.
11. Once again, I congratulate you on your achievements and offer my best wishes for your future endeavours.

Thank you.  
Jai Hind.