

Press Release: 25th Kelkar Alumni Lecture Delivered By Prof. CNR Rao

Kanpur, UP: For the 25th Kelkar Alumni Lecture, Prof CNR Rao, National Research Professor and Honorary President, Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research, gave a talk on '**Can India Be A Global Leader In Science And Education?**'.

In his speech, Prof. Rao touched upon the many problems that science and education are facing in India. Giving the examples of Asian countries like China and South Korea, he highlighted the lack of investment in education in India. While 4-5 per cent of South Korea's GDP goes to science, in India approximately 1 per cent of the GDP is allocated for education. Prof. Rao stressed on the fact that this figure is abysmally low and lack of funds is an important factor holding back the science in India. Industry funding is also lacking in India – as compared to other countries, which get almost 50 per cent of their research funds from the industry, while India gets only 5 per cent.

A direct result of this lack of funding can be seen in the state of Indian laboratories, according to Prof. Rao. When compared with world-class labs in other countries, Indian labs are lacking in infrastructure, which is another reason why science in India is falling behind.

He also advised students to do a lot more on the personal front. Quoting *The Road Less Travelled* by Robert Frost, Rao urged the students to look for newer research avenues instead of keeping at the tried and tested research fields.

Prof. Rao also mentioned that in India, we need to look for talent harder. According to him, "*big science is happening in small labs and this is the science that is getting ignored.*" Also, with close to 60 million people in India living in rural areas, we need to find a way to discover the hidden talent amongst them.

He advised students to not worry about the daily problems and to get rid of selfishness and anger as these are detrimental to scientific research. He also stressed on the importance of humility and time management in young, aspiring scientists.

Ending his talk on a positive note, Prof. Rao said, "*India can succeed in spite of the many challenges we face, if only we make up our minds. If the industry and government support us, if the society supports us, and if we make up our minds, then nothing can stop us.*"

Prof. Manna, Director of IIT Kanpur, welcomed the honorary speaker and Prof. Kerpa Shankar, Secretary of Alumni Association, IIT Kanpur presented a vote of thanks at this lecture. Kelkar Alumni Lecture was instituted in the year 1979 by the IIT Kanpur alumni association. Till date, there have been 24 lectures by dignitaries in diverse fields such as social activism, politics, cinema, judiciary and many more. This year was also the first time the lecture was webcast to IIT Kanpur alumni all over the world.