

# 'Institutes of higher learning should be granted autonomy'

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**Kanpur:** With a view to introspect and plan for future, the experts, who were present in the Outreach auditorium of IIT-K on Sunday on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee programme, delivered lectures on the subject 'Challenges in Higher Education'.

Expressing his concern over the delay in the implementation of the policies chalked out for improving the standards of the higher technical education in India, Sam Pitroda, chairman of the National Knowledge Commission said, "Most of the problems have solutions on the table, still the debate is going on for long. In reality, it is the time to act now. It is time for the vice-chancellors of the universities, directors of the institutes and the heads of the departments to act but unfortunately everybody is waiting for the other person to take the initiative."

He further added, "If the focus is not put on the application of the technology in the field of education, we will lose the opportunity of moving ahead. We require mobility wherein the students can take part in the educational programmes of the other universities also and I am very concerned that the time is running out of our hands and we are not inching ahead."

Pitroda also highlighted the fact that there is a dearth of talented, educated people here in the Indian society and thus, there is a severe shortage of the skilled faculty in the institutes of high repute.

The need, therefore, is to rapidly change the present higher education system, he added.

The moment Pitroda concluded his talk, the jampacked hall burst out in applause. The eminent guests present then put up questions to him which were answered patiently.



Arun Shourie, a noted author and senior BJP leader, addressing gathering on the occasion of golden jubilee programme of IIT-K on Sunday

It was now the turn of author, journalist and senior BJP leader, Arun Shourie to present his views. Shourie also expressed his concern over the higher technical education being neglected for long. "The standards and norms of excellence are under assault in India and at the same time China is

Shourie expressed his happiness that the institutions like IITs have started focussing on the areas like bio-engineering, energy generation and distribution and healthcare.

Reacting to the question against the continuation of reservation, raised by one of the members from the audience, he said, "No segment of the society can be left out. It is our duty to impart knowledge to everyone. A positive help (like free education, free accommodation etc) should be given to minorities. Merits should be same for everyone and the standards once set, should not be lowered."

Shourie too received a huge round of applause from the people present in the auditorium. Also present on this occasion were eminent people like director, IIT-K, SG Dhande, Prof Ashutosh Sharma (IIT-K), Prof Manindra Agarwal (IIT-K), ex-director of IIT-Bombay, Prof Ashok Mishra, chairman, Board of Governors, IIT-K, Prof Anandkrishnan, divisional commissioner, Venkateshwar Lu and others.

## IIT-K GOLDEN JUBILEE

moving ahead in the field of higher education with a very high speed, giving tough competition to our country. India is even facing a tough competition from the countries like Nigeria, Cyprus etc," said Shourie in the presence of the distinguished gathering.

He further elucidated that the government institutions have become dysfunctional and corrupt, therefore, there is an urgent need to provide autonomy to the institutes of higher learning. He said that the benchmark should be made against the best and not against the people in our catchment.