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**Universities should be enablers of society and  
not mere gatekeepers of higher education : President**

Advocating change in the strategy of higher education, President Pranab Mukherjee today called upon the Universities to reinvent themselves to deliver relevant knowledge and actionable skills. Addressing the Convocation of the 154 years old University of Mumbai, at its heritage Fort Campus, Shri Mukherjee exhorted the universities to impart appropriate guidance to today's youth facing moral dilemmas, who are caught between traditional values and western culture. The President said "universities will need to reinvent themselves as enablers of society rather than gatekeepers of higher education.

Underlining the role played by technology, Shri Mukherjee said, "delivering lectures and presenting thoughts through written material is going to be ancillary to creating learning environments. In the near future, teachers will emerge as facilitators of thought through multiple technology platforms." He observed "in the age of smart phones and tablet computers, ideas now travel at the speed of thought. It is important for us to remain up to date with what is happening in the world ". Thus saying, he called upon the teaching fraternity to re-learn, re-engage and re-train themselves for the immediate future.

The President called upon the City of Mumbai and the Government of Maharashtra to become more proactive in finding ways and means to enable greater funding and partnerships with industry houses, other universities and central government bodies. Shri Mukherjee complemented the University of Mumbai for its initiative in establishing the Centre of Nano-Technology and said more and more such initiatives are needed for creating space for new thinking.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan, in his speech said that the challenge of quantity has been adequately addressed, and now it is time to focus on improving quality of education further. He pledged his government's support for the new initiatives of the University.

President Pranab Mukherjee, Maharashtra Governor K Sankaranarayanan and Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan later presented Gold Medals to 51 students from different departments for their various academic achievements. Vice Chancellor of the University Prof. Rajan Welukar presented a detailed reports about new initiatives and activities of the University covering infrastructure development, academic activities and extra-curricular activities.

Mumbai University today has over 667 affiliated colleges and institutions and 6.5 lakh students on its rolls. Many of the prestigious institutes and colleges of the university viz Veermata Jijabai Technological Institute, St. Xavier College, Sardar Patel College of Engineering have been granted autonomy, while its own erstwhile Department of Chemical Technology has now become a deemed university.

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