**Good morning everybody. Wish you all a very Happy Republic Day!**

Glad to see students and faculty out on a cold morning for flag hoisting- Fills us all with the hope that INDIA IS INDEED SHINING!

Am happy and privileged to be standing in front of you. This is our 67th Republic Day. It is that time of the year when we can remember and feel proud of several aspects about our country. We can remember our own fantastic commanders who fought for freedom in our land. We can remember our great Leaders, who set the Vision for this nation. We can remember our giant strides in science and Technology. So on and so forth.

**But what is really Special on Republic Day of India 2016 ? Just to name some of them…**

* This is the first time in the Indian history since 1950 that a French contingent will participate in the Republic Day parade of India along with the Indian armed forces.
* This is the first time that “The topic ‘our duties’ will be discussed in schools, colleges and other places.
* After many years (26 years later), this is the first time that the Indian Army dogs are back to participating in the Republic Day Parade. Around 36 Indian Army dogs including 24 Labradors and 12 German Shepherds will take part in the parade.
* This is first time in the Indian history after 66 years that there will be no BSF camel contingent participation in the republic day parade.

The last year has been significant in terms of initiative taking by the Indian Government across many fields- Digital India, Start up India, Swach Bharat etc- to name a few. I will very briefly refresh our memories on these before dwelling on our action points:

The first one- Digital India- is centered on 3 Key Areas :

• Digital Infrastructure as a Utility to Every Citizen

 • Governance & Services on Demand

• Digital Empowerment of Citizen

Our country, which is the [third largest internet user](http://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/technology/internet/india-is-now-worlds-third-largest-internet-user-after-us-china/article5053115.ece) after China and the United States, could definitely benefit from a programme that brings digital infrastructure to its population. The programme aims to provide broadband coverage to 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats by December 2016 and Free WiFi in 2.5 lakh schools. With a 16,000 crore INR estimated cost, mobile coverage is also to be provided to about 42,300 villages.

Global investors have supported the Government’s Digital India initiative. Microsoft CEO, Satya Nadella intends to become India's partner in the Digital India program. He said that his company will set up a low cost broadband technology service to 5 lakh villages across the country. Sundar Pichai, CEO, Google, said that India will play a big part in driving technology forward in future which will improve people's lives.

The second initiative is **START UP INDIA**

Some aspects of this are :

**1. Self certification to reduce regulatory liabilities by start ups.**

**2.**An all-India Start up hub will be created as a single contact point for start-up foundations in India, which will help the entrepreneurs to exchange knowledge and access financial aid.

**3.** An online portal, an app , in the shape of a mobile application, will be launched to help start-up founders to easily register.

**4.** A fast-track system for patent examination at lower costs is being conceptualised -this will promote awareness and adoption of the Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) by the start-up foundations.

**5.** The government will develop a fund with an initial corpus of Rs 2,500 crore and a total corpus of Rs 10,000 crore over four years, to support upcoming start-up enterprises.

So on and so forth..

**The third one is -Swachh Bharat Abhiyan** (i.e..: Clean India Mission)This is a national campaign by the [Government of India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Government_of_India), covering 4,041 statutory cities and towns, to clean the streets, roads and infrastructure of the country.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swachh_Bharat_Abhiyan#cite_note-1)[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swachh_Bharat_Abhiyan#cite_note-2)[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swachh_Bharat_Abhiyan#cite_note-Zee_News-3) Our Prime Minister said that the best memorial to [Mahatma Gandhi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahatma_Gandhi) would be to achieve a "Clean India" by 2019, his 150th birth anniversary AND he nominated nine famous personalities for the campaign. It has been carried forward since then with people from all walks of life joining it.

Another very relevant initiative is “The National Skill Development Corporation India (NSDC)” This is a Public Private Partnership with the primary mandate of catalysing the skills landscape in India.

The main objectives of the NSDC are to:

* Upgrade skills to international standards through significant industry involvement and to develop necessary frameworks for standards, curriculum and quality assurance
* Enhance, support and coordinate private sector initiatives for skill development through appropriate Public-Private Partnership (PPP) models; strive for significant operational and financial involvement from the private sector.

**International Yoga Day** is another highlight and it is now celebrated annually on June 21 and was declared so at the [United Nations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations) [General Assembly](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations_General_Assembly) on December 11, 2014.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Yoga_Day#cite_note-1)  This date was suggested ,as it is the [longest day of the year](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Summer_Solstice) in the [Northern Hemisphere](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Hemisphere). and shares special significance in many parts of the world.

I have briefly touched upon five initiatives that have been recently started in our country. Our beloved PM Mr Narendar Modi is probably one of the MOST VISIBLE and HEARD PM of recent times.. His monthly feature of MANN ki BAAT has dwelt on these aspects and many more and has tried to educate Indians on the Government’s agenda.

My belief is that **Excellence in anything lies in the execution**- that is, while all these initiatives can be justified on a stand alone basis, for these to succeed however , they require whole hearted implementation. It is not enough to begin things, - instead developing them into workable ideas that create impact is far more important and difficult.

Striving for excellence does not mean that you must be perfect. It only means that you use your talents, abilities, and skills in the best way possible by giving that little extra. Can we all therefore, choose one of these initiatives and come up with an implementation road map in our lives on how we can make a difference ?

We may decide to go with that initiative that appeals to us the most. And work with like-minded people who can motivate us through the journey. We can keep track of each other’s progress and help in the execution- to move things forward. Looking at every situation in terms of the value we can add to that situation contributes to a life of excellence. So look for ways to contribute. Constant **Follow Through and Follow Up requires perseverance.**. Look for ways of learning from others and online too.

My message today is therefore about Striving for excellence . Ideas are a great starting point but are of no use if not followed through. According to the famous musician Ronnie Oldham :

 “Excellence is the Result of Caring more than others think is Wise, Risking more than others think is Safe, Dreaming more than others think is Practical, and Expecting more than others think is Possible.”

You can’t save the whole world single-handedly, and we can’t all be a [Gandhi](http://www.arvinddevalia.com/blog/2009/10/02/6-key-lessons-in-life-from-a-140-year-old-man/) or a [Mandela](http://www.arvinddevalia.com/blog/2007/01/31/our-light/), but you can certainly make a difference one person at a time.

Our Esteemed Institution XLRI, was founded with a vision towards liberation and development of independent India. Keeping in synch with the need of the hour, it is a premier business school that provides value education focusing on fast economic growth and progress. Recently it was honoured as best place to study by Skill Tree development Knowledge consortium, Economic Times IR conclave for its contribution in the field of IR ,Best private bus school in the country, no. one Bus school in infrastructure terms- so on and so forth.

Let us add another feather to our cap by taking up one of these initiatives and providing a blue print for implementation. It is an arduous and time consuming task, but who said that Nation building task is easy. I will end with a famous quote from Swami Vivekananda- I am sure many of you have heard this one titled :

Where The Mind Is Without Fear

" Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high; Where knowledge is free; Where the world has not broken up into fragments by narrow domestic walls; Where tireless striving stretches its arms towards perfection; Where the clear stream of reason has not lost its way in the dreary desert sand of dead habit; Where the mind is led forward by thee into ever-widening thought and action into that heaven of freedom, my Father, LET MY COUNTRY AWAKE......."

Thank you for the opportunity and JAI HIND!