

IIT Mandi's 8th Foundation Day Commemoration

24.02.17



Lighting of the lamp by the Chief Guest Prof. Alan Mickelson of the University of Colorado (Boulder, USA), Prof. T.A. Gonsalves (Director, IIT Mandi), and other dignitaries, to mark the beginning of the 8th Foundation Day function.

IIT Mandi celebrated its 8th Foundation Day on 24 February 2017 at its permanent campus at Kamand. Prof. Alan Mickelson of the University of Colorado (Boulder, USA) was the Chief Guest at the function. On the occasion, the Director, IIT Mandi, Prof. Timothy A. Gonsalves, welcomed dignitaries, faculty, staff, and students. The dignitaries included Prof. Subrata Ray (Distinguished Visiting Professor), Prof. B.D. Chaudhary (Dean Academics), Prof. Ramesh Oruganti (Professor Emeritus, and Chairman of the Teaching and Learning Committee of IIT Mandi), Prof. Narendra Karmarkar (internationally recognized mathematician who developed Karmarkar's Algorithm), and Prof. Bringi Dev (Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore).

In 2009, IIT Mandi's foundation stone was laid on the very same day at Kamand to mark the beginning of this Institute. Now, the vast majority of its 800 students and 100 faculty are residing in the Kamand campus. IIT Mandi has truly lived up to its motto: "Scaling the Heights". According to the prestigious Nature Index, in 2015-16 IIT Mandi ranked 6th among all IITs based on total number of publications, and ranked 3rd based on publications per faculty. The 8th Foundation Day commemorated and celebrated the contribution of the entire IIT Mandi community towards building a world-class research and educational institute in Himachal Pradesh.

In keeping with IIT Mandi's emphasis on holistic personality development, a Sports Week was organized in the run up to Foundation Day. This witnessed enthusiastic participation by students, staff and faculty, and included games such as Volleyball, Badminton, Short Put, Tug – of – War, A 3 - km run, a 5 - km run, relay race, and even Fussball. In the Cricket match between the IIT Mandi team and the Bar Council of Mandi team, IIT Mandi achieve a thrilling victory, reaching a target of 191 with 7 wickets in hand.



The function commenced with the lighting of the lamp and the singing of the national anthem, followed by a minute's silence to mourn the demise of student Deep Prakash Singh. In his address to the audience, the Director, Prof. Gonsalves, highlighted two aspects of IIT Mandi's contribution to wider society: one, the launch of the IIT Mandi Catalyst, a technology business incubator. This has funding from the Department of Science and Technology, Vishal Bharat Comnet, the Ministry of Human Resource Development, and the Government of Himachal Pradesh.

Catalyst aims to incubate technology startups by students, faculty and people of the region. Two, EWOK (Enabling Women of Kamand), started by women faculty and campus residents. This project aims to help village women in the Kamand Valley to develop employable skills and to start village-scale enterprises, and has already helped 9 local businesses, of which 4 are thriving. Prof. Gonsalves expressed the hope that using the Internet and the pervasive mobile network, these enterprises would serve both local and global customers, building on traditional strengths.

The Director's address was followed by an address by Prof. B.D. Chaudhary, the Dean (Academics), who outlined his wishlist for the Institute in the coming year. After this, the General Secretary of the Students' Gymkhana, Ravi Kumar, spoke of the considerable achievement of students, including that of Ayush Yadav, founder Coordinator of the astronomy club, and research intern at Space Telescope and Science Institute, Baltimore MD, USA for NASA. This was followed by a stimulating speech by the Chief Guest, Prof. Mickelson, who has worked on issues of sustainable development in countries such as Peru, Haiti and Nepal, and has authored several textbooks and research papers in the domain of Electrical Engineering. He appreciated the new and unique approach of IIT Mandi in giving its engineering students a hands-on understanding of engineering through innovating courses such as Reverse Engineering and emphasis on prototype development. He reminded the audience that an increasingly inter-connected world needed inter-disciplinary perspectives and skills, and that IIT Mandi's curriculum was well-designed and directed towards this aim.

The Chief Guest's address was followed by a cultural programme. In the cultural programme, students of Takshila School staged a meaningful dance performance on the theme of deforestation and afforestation. While students from the Uhl Dance Club showcased their skills in Western dance and vocal music, other campus residents treated the audience to a mesmerizing Bharatnatyam performance on the theme of women's empowerment, set to a stirring poem by the famous American poet Maya Angelou. Faculty members Dr. Puran Singh and Dr. Deepak Swami regaled the audience with a Punjabi song and a Hindi poem titled 'Bhookhund ki Bhawna', respectively. Dr. Rajendra Ray delivered the vote of thanks and brought the proceedings to a close.

The day also saw the distribution of awards to the students for academic excellence, to Teaching Assistants for excellent assistance, to staff members for diligent performance of their duties, and to faculty for their achievements. Additionally, Dr. Priscilla Gonsalves handed out sports and art awards to students from six primary schools in the area which had participated in sports and arts competitions. Although eight years is a short period in the life of an institution, IIT Mandi has carved a unique niche for itself in HP and India in this time, and also attained international recognition in the realm of science and tech research. By giving back to the community through a variety of initiatives, IIT Mandi is doing Himachal proud.



Photo Credit: Himanshu Kumar, Abhinandan, Amirth, Dr. Tripti Singh and Dr. Deepak Swami