

Universities Must Promote Innovation: Governor Thawar Chand Gehlot

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- Vice Chancellors' Conference organised by the Association of Indian Universities
- Hundreds of Vice Chancellors participate in deliberations

Hon'ble Governor Shri Thawar Chand Gehlot said that universities must actively promote innovations that provide solutions to challenges in rural development, healthcare, education, environment, and digital inclusion.



Mr. S. Ashok Rao, Registrar, Dr. Pankaj Mittal, Secy General, AIU; Dr. M.R. Jayaram, Chancellor, Thaawar Chand Gehlot, Governor of Karnataka; Prof. Vinay Kumar Pathak, President, AIU; Dr. Kuldeep Kumar Raina, VC

Inaugurating the two-day South Zone Vice Chancellors' Conference-2026, jointly organised by the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) and hosted by Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences (RUAS), the Governor stated that India can transition from a knowledge-based economy to an innovation-driven global superpower only when universities become centres of entrepreneurship. He emphasised the need to expose youth to the latest knowledge and technologies so that they can enhance their skills, move towards self-employment, and contribute meaningfully to national development.

He noted that South India has consistently provided leadership in education, science, and technology. Cities like Bengaluru have demonstrated how global-level innovations emerge when education, research, and industry work together. This model, he said, must be expanded to other parts of the country. Discussions during the conference would focus on fostering entrepreneurial thinking among students, establishing incubation and innovation centres to promote education, technology, and national development, and strengthening university–industry collaboration for innovation development. He added that entrepreneurship is not merely a tool for economic prosperity, but a powerful driver of social change, sustainable development, and inclusive growth.

Referring to the conference theme, **“Nurturing Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Higher Education Institutions,”** the Governor said it is highly relevant. Higher education institutions are not just degree-awarding centres, but hubs of innovation, leadership, and nation-building. In the present era of entrepreneurship and innovation, young minds are the greatest asset. With proper guidance, resources, and opportunities, their ideas can lead to self-reliance, generate employment, and benefit society and the nation. Noting current realities and future expectations, he said it is time to reflect on India’s role in shaping the future of higher education.

The Governor also lauded Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences, Bengaluru, for its visionary academic environment, research initiatives, innovative teaching methodologies, and commitment to holistic development. With modern infrastructure, an interdisciplinary approach, and strong industry linkages, the university provides ample opportunities for students to grow both intellectually and personally, he said.

Speaking on the occasion, **Dr. Kuldeep Kumar Raina, Vice Chancellor, RUAS** said the conference is being held over two days. On the first day, several Vice Chancellors shared their views. He expressed happiness that around 120+ Vice Chancellors, senior educationists, and academic leaders from Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Puducherry, Karnataka, and Kerala participated in person, while about 100 participants joined online.

AIU President Prof. Vinay Kumar Pathak said that instead of preparing students only to be employees, institutions must equip them with knowledge of innovation and encourage them to become entrepreneurs. This responsibility lies with educationists, he said. He added that the resolutions adopted during the two-day conference would be submitted to the government, which must take responsibility for their implementation.

AIU Secretary General Dr. (Mrs.) Pankaj Mittal and RUAS Registrar S. Ashok Rao welcomed the dignitaries and participants.

The valedictory session will be held on January 21st at 1.00 pm. Ganeshan Kannabiran and Prof. S.R. Niranjana, Vice Chairman of the Higher Education Council, will be the chief guests.

"Universities must embrace innovation and focus on preparing students either for employment or as self-entrepreneurs. This is precisely why we have convened this Vice Chancellors' Conference. Students are the most important stakeholders of

educational institutions. We should not create a situation where graduates blame institutions for their inability to find jobs after completing their studies. Vice Chancellors must take strong decisions, submit them to the government, and ensure effective implementation.” – Dr. M.R. Jayaram, Chancellor, Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences (RUAS)

Mr. S. Ashok, Registrar, Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences (RUAS), delivered the Vote of Thanks at the **AIU South Zone Vice Chancellors’ Meet 2025–26**, held today under the aegis of the Association of Indian Universities. He expressed his sincere gratitude to the distinguished dignitaries, Vice Chancellors, academicians, and delegates for their active participation and valuable deliberations. He also acknowledged the support and coordination of all stakeholders in ensuring the smooth and successful conduct of the meet, reiterating RUAS’s commitment to fostering academic collaboration and excellence.

