

## Speech by Dr. Gautam Baruah, Director IIT, Guwahati

...Mr. Ajai Chowdhry, Chairman HCL Infosystems, distinguished guests, senior officers of HCL, ladies & gentlemen I thank HCL for giving me this opportunity to say a few words on this occasion. I am not sure I am the right person; we are talking about Mindia, because basically I am a techy, more used to sitting behind a computer than talking on the prowess of Indian Mind. Nevertheless since I am here let me say a few things, to begin I will say a few words about HCL, I had a long association with HCL Infosystems Ltd. as you know I am in computer science field so I have been involved with this company since my graduation days my association properly began at IIT Kanpur when I purchased a Horizon computer when the first UNIX system at IIT Kanpur was installed in late 80s as you all know and when I was at Kanpur I had many occasions of interactions and after moving to Guwahati I had close interaction with almost all the HCL staff who were involved from North to East from Calcutta or from Delhi and as you know HCL actually has the best support structure among all the major IT companies in this region, it's a fact, by far much better than anyone else so this makes HCL special for this region & of course it means we expect a lot from HCL because things are moving so fast our expectations also move equally fast. Also HCL as you know is a group company, it has almost all sectors of IT, its group companies are in hardware, software, BPO, networking, education & so on. On this I also want to say that HCL as a company in spite of the boom in other sectors specially in IT sector, BPO sector has kept steady in the hardware sector, many of the other bigger companies seem to be slowly to join these sectors or its slowing down the involvement in the hardware sector, probably because of lower margins today but not HCL, I think India move into the hardware manufacturing in a big way sooner or later and I am sure HCL will be in front with all its expertise that it has. Let me now come to the Indian Mind, Indian Mind has achieved so much in the recent past that I have little doubt that it is going to lead India to become a developed nation within our life time. Minds develop in right conditions and right environment, present opportunities must be given to young minds to flower to their full potential, so we must also look at the environment, the facilities that will provide because then only the Indian mind can flourish. After Independence our leaders had the foresight to put emphasis on the basic infrastructure, Mindia was in work from then, the public sector enabled establishment of industry like steel, gold, electronics, petroleum etc. Yes the time is right today to scale down the level of public sector industry but this was not the case right after independence. Similarly education is an important component for development of the mind, setting up of the top-level institutions IITs and IIMs was a result of the mind of our leaders at that time, and Jawaharlal Nehru had stated *"The goals of setting up the institutions to provide scientists & technologists with highest caliber, who will engage in work design and development to built the nation with self reliance in our technological needs"*. To whatever extent IIT has succeeded in these goals. These and similar institutions that were set up helped produce a technical and managerial gather that is taking India forward and has also made its mark as a global country. Today as we all know that Indians are leading in strategic positions in major corporations of the world the prowess of Indian engineers is recognized and respected worldwide, of course the success has come more in IT areas in recent past at least than in others and I have a theory on that possibly because Indian tradition of thinking algorithmically rather than analytically may have something to do with it, actually to be fair this is not really my idea Prof. Lodha Narsimha has a very interesting article in EPW recently where he has told us that if you look at Indian mathematical thesis you will find that they give solutions to problems that they give algorithms on how to solve problems rather than postulating axioms and giving

theorems to help understand the problem and it is normal analytical way so maybe Indian have programming in their genes and so maybe we are doing so well in the IT sector. India today is poised to take off economically, no it has already taken off I suppose with 8%plus growth rate, however the pace that was created and nurtured is no longer sufficient, it is showing signs of cracking, the rapid expansion of opportunities has not seen a competitive increase in the facilities, we complain today about the poor level of schools and colleges, they were much better right after independence or so we are told but then we must remember there were so few of them, the number of schools and colleges have seen huge growth in the last thirty years. However the investments made have not grown at the same rate, the situation is particularly bore in this part of the world with uneven growth in the country has been dictated by market forces, there is disparity among the regions & it is growing, the northeast of the country had all the capital income that was above the national average income at time of independence even the states are at the bottom of the pine, so many minds are negotiating in both corners without proper guidance & without proper facilities, the state governments are themselves poor as the resources basis are small they do not collect enough revenue to meet the financial investment required at the same time national resources like oil, timber, tea are being exploited and utilized for the growth of the nation but the surplus is not being invested in the region to begin with this has economic reasons in one corner there is no advantage of setting up plants here, the poor communication facilities and high transportation cost due to unreliable network, this lack of investment laid in terms of unemployment to this effect, to militancy, you all know of these problems. Now after roads, rail and airways have improved not to speak of Delhi province we can also talk about the northeast policy, opening of roads to the neighboring countries, investment is not coming because of fear, invisible fear maybe, but this fear, Nevertheless, so we need to get out of this vicious circle the great Indian mind each can analyze the problems, the need is to find solution, I have confidence solution will be found since Indian mind is so resourceful and we have gathered here to celebrate its achievements. This is one big achievement is going to have to add to its long list of success the solutions we must find because we can not allow a young boy of Sohali to go to a school without a blackboard and where the teacher has not heard of real numbers let alone complex ones we must add his mind to the pool of Indian minds so that our great country can move to greater heights in all inclusive manner but in one direction do we need to acquire mind it's not a question of finding a tactical solution – NO. Science, mathematics, and engineering is not going to help, it is also not a question of throwing money at a problem, the government of India is already doing part of that with Sarvashiksha Abiyan for example this kind of infusion of funds is necessary but is not sufficient to my mind there have to be full values, there have to be job opportunities, there have to be rewards of hard work, in short there has to be a Bayer's economy. India is marching ahead but in all parts it must march ahead together. I have tried to highlight some difficulties, but I think there is no need to despair, the dark clouds I feel are going away notwithstanding and the situation is right for take off in this region the difficulties that we have faced I am confident are on the way out all the minds of the country must work together to help the state and I am optimistic because I have seen Indian achieve so much already that if we all work together this will be the biggest success and this will be the biggest achievement of the Indian Mind. Thank You.

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