

**Welcome Note by the Rector of the University of Cyprus, Professor Constantinos Christofides,
Lecture of the President of India HE Ram Nath Kovind & Unveiling of the Bust of Rabindranath
Tagore
4 September 2018, Lecture Hall B108, 11:30**

Your excellency,

Distinguished guests,

Dear colleagues and students,

Today is a historic day for the University of Cyprus, as we welcome here His Excellency the President of the Republic of India, Ram Nath Kovind.

We have the honor of welcoming the leader of a great nation, of the largest democracy in the world, India.

Large, not only in population and territory, but also mainly in culture and tradition.

We also monitor your country's great achievements in space, energy, medicine and smart technologies. At the same time, we know the existence of harmonious cooperation in your universities between scholars and scientists. The University of Cyprus is collaborating with 5 higher education institutions and research centres of India for promoting research and innovation and for encouraging academic and student mobility.

On behalf of the university community and especially of our students, I want to tell you a big thank-you for your presence here today and the symbolic donation of the bust of Rabindranath Tagore.

This statue will be a timeless connection between Cyprus and India.

As a place to meet and interact, as an institution focused on promoting art and multiculturalism, the University of Cyprus has placed the bust of Tagore to its premises.

It will be an opportunity for the students, the guests of UCY and the community to learn about the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize in Literature. It will be a stimulus for discussion about the value of literature and the importance of culture in general.

To be honest with you Mr President, as a Physicist, I was more an admirer of Venkata Raman, a Nobel Prize Winner in Physics, in laser physics in 1930.

Universities are places challenging people's limits, spirits and minds, which dare people to put their imagination into practice.

"Don't limit a child to your own learning, for he was born in another time"

Here at the University we teach, not to limit, but to expand the borders of knowledge. Critical thinking is about everything. It's about learning and processing the knowledge in ways that allow humanity to better itself and to evolve.

I quote the words of Tagore to remind ourselves of the potential of young generation and motivate us all to keep empowering youngsters to excel.

Age Considers, Youth Ventures – another saying of Tagore reminding us to empower youth to challenge their limits!

I would like to express my gratitude to the Republic of India and the diplomatic mission of the country in Cyprus, and especially the High Commissioner, for their initiative to collaborate with the University of Cyprus and willingness to share their culture and customs with our community.

We look forward to future common activities.

Your Excellency,

As a token of appreciation and respect, at the end of this session we will present you with a special gift. A replica of a Plank shaped figure of white painted ware. The authentic one was discovered beyond the green line, in the occupied area of Cyprus. 9000 years of history split! Our ancestor's legacy calls for the island's reunification. India can help towards this direction. After all, I strongly believe that this is the people's willingness, of all communities of Cyprus

We are honored by your presence here today.

Mr President the stage is yours.

Thank you.