

**Address by Jón Atli Benediktsson, Rector of the University of  
Iceland, on the occasion of a visit by the President of India,  
Shri Ram Nath Kovind, to the University of Iceland. Held in  
the Aula in the Main Building on Tuesday 10 September  
2019, 12.00 pm**

Your Excellency, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, President of the Republic of India; Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, former President of Iceland; T. Armstrong Changsan, Ambassador of India; Guðmundur Árni Stefánsson, Ambassador of Iceland to India; ladies and gentlemen.

It is my great honour to welcome President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind to the University of Iceland Aula to present a lecture entitled **India-Iceland for a Green Planet.**

This trip to Iceland is President Kovind's first official visit to a Nordic country and it is therefore the University of Iceland's enormous privilege to be the first Nordic university he has visited. For many years, the University of Iceland has placed considerable emphasis on strong academic links with India. For example, the University of Iceland has signed cooperative agreements with Indian universities and is a member of the Nordic Centre in India, which was established in 2001 and is an important platform for teaching and research cooperation between its Nordic members and Indian partner institutions. This very autumn, the University of Iceland is offering Hindi as a university subject for the first time, and I would like to extend my particular thanks to the current and former Ambassadors of India to Iceland and the Indian government for their unwavering support in making this a reality. Finally, I would like to mention that Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, former President of Iceland, who is here with us today and will give a note of thanks after President Kovind's lecture, was presented with the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding in 2010 and has used the prize money to provide several Indian university students with Nehru-Grimsson Fellowships to fund one semester of study in the field of glaciology and climate change at the University of Iceland. The University of Iceland warmly embraces this excellent education initiative by former President Grimsson.

Before I give the floor to the President of India, I would like to say a few words about our distinguished speaker. His Excellency Shri Ram Nath Kovind was born on October 1, 1945, in the Kanpur Dehat district of Uttar Pradesh. He completed his junior school education in Kanpur and pursued higher education at DAV College, Kanpur, receiving a bachelor's degree in commerce and an LL.B. law degree. He worked as a lawyer prior to entering politics in 1994 and served as Member of Parliament in the upper house of the Parliament of India from 1994 to 2006. He served as the 36th Governor of the state of Bihar from 2015 to 2017 before becoming the 14th President of India on July 25, 2017.

It is my great pleasure to welcome now His Excellency President Shri Ram Nath Kovind to the podium.

I would like to thank President Shri Kovind for a fascinating lecture. Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, former President of Iceland, will now give a note of thanks.