



Convocation Address – IIM Ahmedabad

Shri Pankaj R Patel, Chairperson, Board of Governors, IIMA

61st Annual Convocation of IIMA | March 28, 2026

Our distinguished Chief Guest, Ms. Chandrika Tandon. Professor Bharat Bhasker, Director, IIMA. Board of Governors. Members of the faculty. IIMA community members. Graduating students. Ladies and gentlemen —

Look around you. Take it all in. This moment — right here, right now — will never come again.

Every great story has a turning point. A moment where everything changes. Tonight, that moment is yours.

Welcome to the 61st Annual Convocation of IIM Ahmedabad.

I am deeply moved to welcome Ms. Chandrika Tandon back home. Yes — home. Because IIMA never truly leaves you. She is a member of the PGP Class of 1975. She once sat where you sit today. She felt what you feel tonight. Since then, she has built a life that takes your breath away. The first and youngest female Indian partner at McKinsey & Company in New York. A passionate philanthropist. An institution-builder. And last year — a Grammy Award winner for her soul-stirring album, Triveni. Ms. Tandon, I want you to think back. Think back to the day you first walked through these gates. Perhaps your hands were trembling slightly. Perhaps your heart was racing. You carried your dreams in silence — not yet sure if you were worthy of this place. Look at you now. You walked out of these gates with a dream. And you turned it into something beautiful. Thank you for coming back to inspire the next generation.

To our graduating students — tonight belongs to you. And only you!

Do you realise what you have done? You have survived some of the most demanding years of your life. You have pushed through sleepless nights and impossible deadlines. You have doubted yourself — and kept going anyway. That takes more courage than most people will ever know. And today, you have earned the right to stand here.

You are now part of something far greater than yourselves. A global alumni community that has shaped industries, moved governments, built institutions, and changed lives — across every corner of this world. That is not a footnote. It is the standard you now carry forward. IIMA's legacy has been forged over six decades. Through the vision of its founders. The dedication of its faculty. The ambition of its students. Today, that legacy passes — in part — into your hands. Guard it. Honour it. Build upon it.

Let values be your compass

The road ahead will not always be clear. There will be moments of doubt. Moments of failure. Moments when you stand alone and wonder if you made the right choices. In those moments — and they will come — go back to your values. They will not let you down. Integrity is not just a word. It is your shield. Rigour is not just a habit. It is your edge. Empathy is not just a feeling. It is your greatest strength. Hold on to them. No matter what. Integrity, rigour, and empathy will outlast every trend and every disruption. They are the most durable tools in your toolkit.

Stay fluent in the language of tomorrow

The world you are stepping into is being fundamentally rewritten. Technology is at the heart of this change. Artificial Intelligence is not coming. It is already here. It is reshaping finance, healthcare, manufacturing, governance, and the arts. The pace is breathtaking — and at times, frightening. Governments worldwide, including our own, are making bold investments in AI-driven progress.

Technological fluency is no longer optional. It is foundational. But fluency alone is not enough. The leaders of your generation must ask harder questions. Is this technology ethical? Is it equitable? Is it sustainable? The ability to interrogate technology — not just use it — will define the most impactful leaders of your era. The world needs leaders who do not just use technology — but who have the conscience to guide it.

Think like an entrepreneur — always

Whether you launch your own venture or lead within an established organisation, carry an entrepreneurial spirit. Be resourceful. Be adaptable. Stop seeing constraints as obstacles. The most transformative innovations in history were not born from abundance. They were born from limitation. Challenge assumptions — including your own. Leadership at its finest is not the exercise of authority. It is the acceptance of responsibility.

Never lose the human thread

Amid the pursuit of professional excellence, hold on to the people who matter. Your relationships — with friends, family, mentors, and colleagues — are not separate from your success. They are the foundation of it. Genuine human connection will sustain you through your most difficult seasons. Do not let ambition crowd it out. As you walk out of this campus today, carry IIMA with you. Not just as a name on your degree. As a way of thinking. A standard of character. A commitment to making a meaningful difference. The world does not need more people who are merely competent. It needs people who feel something. People who care enough to

act. People who are bold enough to lead, humble enough to listen, and wise enough to know the difference.

You are ready. We are so incredibly proud of you more than you know. Now go and make it count. The world is waiting for you

Congratulations to the graduating Class of 2026!

Thank you!