

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,  
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND  
AT DEFENCE SERVICES STAFF COLLEGE**

**Wellington, August 04, 2021**

I am delighted to be here with the bright participants of this course at one of the premier Armed Forces Training Institutes of our country. This college has the mandate of imparting training to selected officers of our armed forces and friendly foreign countries. My special greetings to the 30 student officers from other countries who are also attending this course.

I am glad to hear insightful speeches from the young student-officers on complex issues of strategic significance touching upon internal and external security, Sagar military diplomacy roadmap, self-reliance, and power rivalries in the Indo-Pacific with reference to countries in the Indian Ocean region. I am specially delighted that there was a lady officer among the speakers. I have been told that the number of lady officers in this course is going to rise in the future. That is a welcome development.

The natural beauty of the Nilgiri hills and the salubrious climate of this area are conducive to learning. I am told that the word salubrious is often repeated to describe the climate and weather conditions of this area. Its Latin root-words denote its meaning as health-giving. This place is only 11 degrees north of the equator, but it has very pleasant weather throughout the year. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the first sanitarium of the Madras Presidency was set up in this region. Since then, the health giving and energizing climate of this region has been utilized for various purposes, including learning by defence professionals like you.

I am told that the student officers present here have been selected through a rigorous process based on assessment of competence and

potential. My compliments to each one of you for earning this opportunity to learn. Armed forces officers attached with me have been describing their experiences in this course. I find that they talk about it with a lot of enthusiasm.

I assume, you all are aware of the significant changes instituted in the Higher Defence Organization of the country. Impetus is also being provided to indigenization and self-sufficiency in the defence sector. These initiatives have been taken with a view to make the Armed Forces future ready.

As you go up the ladder of growth, you will have to graduate from the level of single service competencies to multi-domain challenges. That requires greater understanding of joint and multi-domain operations. As the Armed Forces work towards greater integration, jointness and synergy will become stronger. In this context, participation by a few civil services officers and officers of the Coast Guard widens the canvas of mutual learning through this course.

The armed forces of our country are amongst the most respected entities of our great nation. They have earned the regard of the fellow citizens by untiring efforts and great sacrifices. They have rendered invaluable services to the nation during the times of war and peace. They have discharged their duties with dedication and courage while facing internal and external security challenges, and in times of natural calamities.

The recent past has been very difficult for the entire humanity. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all walks of life. I have been told that Defence Services Staff College has successfully run the scheduled courses by effectively adopting a hybrid system blending conventional and online learning. I believe significant changes have also been made in the curriculum and the methods of learning to make it more relevant to emerging challenges. I have been told that the curriculum of the course has always been comprehensive and intense. Because of the quality of content and methods, this course is very popular in other countries also.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to convey my appreciation for the outstanding grit and determination displayed by men and women of the armed forces in dealing with the situation on our borders as well as the Covid-19 pandemic. Very recently I had an opportunity to interact with our officers and soldiers in the Kashmir valley. I felt very happy to observe their high morale and dedication to duty. Most of you have been among the frontline warriors, dealing with these challenges. The country appreciates your commitment and contribution.

We are passing through challenging times which is full of changes. The concepts of National Security and Defence are changing. Geo-strategic and geo-political compulsions and many other factors have made the security landscape more complex. Low intensity conflicts, counter terrorism and non-combat conflicts pose different challenges. There is a need to have a thorough understanding of all aspects.

In these changing times, we have to think of new ways to secure our national interests and ensure our national security. This would require a fresh approach. I am told that during the Staff Course you will be given comprehensive inputs to help you understand the changing dynamics. With an understanding of the larger picture, you will be able to identify your role in the areas of national security.

The emerging threats in the cyber world, and space require state-of-the-art technological responses. Use of advanced technology by non-state actors also calls for upgraded response. Issues like climate change may have impact on security preparedness. All such issues influence the security calculus of the nation. You have to comprehend their implications so that you are better prepared to deal with them.

Dear student officers,

Every new generation stands on the shoulders of previous generations, builds upon this heritage and makes new advances. You all have been identified as potential leaders of our Armed Forces. You have to emulate

the extraordinary standards set by your predecessors and go beyond them.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century society is described as knowledge society. Knowledge truly is power in this century. Just as we are said to be in an era of knowledge economy, we are also into the age of knowledge warfare. As defence professionals you have to be a knowledge warrior. The motto of this college is 'YUDDHAM PRAGYA' which has been translated as 'into war with wisdom'. Let me touch upon the significance of the word 'Pragya' in this context. Sanskrit words cannot have their exact English translations. However, it is possible to comprehend their essence. The word 'Smriti' denotes knowledge about the past. The word 'Mati' describes awareness about the future. The word 'Buddhi' indicates grasp of the present. But the word 'Pragya' covers knowledge about past, present and the future, all the three dimensions of time. So, YUDDHAM PRAGYA' is a very meaningful motto. You build upon the experiences of the past, align such learning to the current context and upgrade your knowledge to become ready for the future.

I am sure that your professional learning here at DSSC will enable you to imbibe the required competencies. It will equip you with the right toolkit to take on bigger challenges in the future.

In order to become effective leaders of men and women, you will have to demonstrate excellence in personal and professional domains. Confidence, courage, endurance, integrity, humility, and simplicity will strengthen you as a person. Continuous learning of cutting-edge technologies, state-of-the-art strategies and tactics, and latest developments will make you sound professionals.

I wish the student officers and distinguished faculty, the very best, in your joint learning endeavours.

Thank you,

JAI HIND!