

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,  
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND  
ON THE OCCASION OF FAREWELL BANQUET HOSTED BY THE  
CHIEFS OF STAFF COMMITTEE**

**New Delhi, July 13, 2022**

First and foremost, I express appreciation to the Chiefs of Staff Committee for organizing this function where I get the opportunity to interact with dignitaries and senior officers from our Armed Forces. I am touched by the warm reception extended to me and the kind words said about me.

Five years ago, when I took over the office of the President, I consciously decided to meet our jawans posted at the borders in difficult terrain and climatic conditions. Infact, my first visit outside Delhi after taking charge as Supreme Commander of Armed Forces was to Leh, Ladakh in August 2017 where I interacted with the personnel of Ladakh Scouts Battalions. I vividly remember how nicely General Bipin Rawat briefed me about the military establishments at Leh. He was an extra-ordinary military leader and will forever be remembered for his exceptional service to the nation. I take this opportunity to pay my humble tributes to him.

In the last five years, I have had the privilege of visiting many military institutions and units in far flung areas where I had occasions to interact with the brave personnel of army, navy and air force. Their devotion to duty, their spirit of 'Service before Self' and commitment to the cause of national security inspires the entire country. We are indeed proud of our Armed Forces who are safeguarding our frontiers in the most difficult terrains and amid challenging climatic and operational conditions. I feel a deep sense of pride in having served as the Supreme Commander of one of the most committed and competent Armed Forces in the world.

During my tenure as the Supreme Commander of the Indian Armed Forces, I observed the fervour and enthusiasm of our armed forces

for rising up to any challenge that came their way. Be it disturbance due to insurgency or a natural calamity, our armed forces have always been at the forefront to deal with the situation.

The team spirit and 'never say die' attitude displayed by the Armed Forces during the COVID-19 pandemic and efforts put in by them for setting up hospitals, distribution of relief material and extending every possible assistance to civil administration are praiseworthy. Their selfless efforts during several disaster management operations have also been commendable. They helped us save thousands of lives. I am sure the Armed Forces would continue to strive forward and excel in all their endeavours.

I am happy that during my tenure as the Supreme Commander, the induction of women in the National Defence Academy has also been initiated. It is indeed a great step which would give an opportunity to our daughters to serve the nation by enrolling in the military. I am sure that they would prove to be worthy daughters of Mother India. Another significant beginning has been the recruitment of Agniveers. I am glad to know that IAF received 7.5 lakh applications under the recently concluded Agnipath recruitment scheme. This is the largest number of applications received in any recruitment cycle of the armed forces till date. It reflects the enthusiasm of our youth to serve the country.

I am happy to note that the armed forces are becoming increasingly self-reliant and the defence sector at the forefront of the 'Make in India' initiative. The development of indigenous manufacturing capabilities is an impressive contribution to the making of an 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'. The strides made towards modernisation and indigenisation are exemplary and oriented towards making them future ready. These achievements are in line with the wishes of my illustrious predecessor Dr A P J Abdul Kalam whose passion for achieving self-reliance in the area of defence is well known.

I had the privilege of presenting 11 colours and 5 standards during my presidency to the different units of the Armed Forces across the

three services. Such presentations acknowledged exceptional natural service rendered by these units.

On this occasion, I extend my warmest greetings to the entire Armed Forces fraternity and especially to the families, who undoubtedly are strong pillars of support.

I also salute the brave-hearts who have made the supreme sacrifice for the motherland and I am sure that their courageous families would continue to be supported by our Armed Forces.

I once again thank you all and wish the Armed Forces of our nation, continued glory and success in all professional endeavours.

Thank You,  
Jai Hind!