

**SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
ON THE OCCASION OF COLOUR PRESENTATION TO ALL
BATTALIONS OF THE LADAKH SCOUTS REGIMENT AND
LADAKH SCOUTS REGIMENT CENTRE**

Leh, Jammu & Kashmir: August 21, 2017

Governor of Jammu and Kashmir Mr N.N. Vohra

Chief Minister Ms Mehbooba Mufti

Chief of Army Staff General Bipin Rawat

Distinguished guests, members of the Ladakh Scouts fraternity and respected war heroes gathered here on the occasion of Colour Presentation to all Battalions of the Ladakh Scouts Regiment and Ladkash Scouts Regiment Centre.

This visit to Ladakh is my first outside Delhi since assuming the office of the President of India. I chose beautiful Leh in Jammu and Kashmir for my first visit and it gives me immense pleasure to be present amid my soldiers. In my capacity as the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, I dedicate this visit to the armed forces of the country.

It has been 54 years since the Ladakh Scouts became part of the Indian Army. This period has been replete with tales of heroism, honour and glory. The genesis of the Regiment was the invasion by Pakistani raiders in 1947-48 and the resolve with which Ladakhis defended their motherland. This continues to remain a matter of pride for the entire country.

Ladakhis earned similar glory with the valour and sacrifice displayed during the Chinese aggression in 1962. You truly are the Defenders of the Himalayas.

In a little over half a century, the Regiment has earned 605 Honours and Awards for conspicuous gallantry and distinguished service. This speaks for the exceptional valour and spirit of the Regiment personnel and is a model for all soldiers and officers of our armed forces. You have earned distinction in various wars and operations and excelled in sports, adventure pursuits and professional challenges.

Your courage and steadfastness have won you the Battle Honour 'Turtuk' for liberating approximately 804 square km of Indian territory in 1971, and Battle Honour 'Batalik' and Theatre Honour 'Kargil' in Operation Vijay in 1999.

The Regiment was a pioneer on the Siachen Glacier, as part of Operation Meghdoot, and Eastern Ladakh, which in a true sense is your home. Your invaluable contribution during Operation Vijay in 1999 earned you the award of the Chief of Army Staff Banner and Unit Citation. I am also pleased to note that one of your battalions participated with great distinction in the United Nations Peace-keeping Mission in Lebanon.

Since a restructuring in the year 2000, all battalions of the Ladakh Scouts and the Regimental Centre have been awarded General Officer Commanding-in-Chief Northern Command Unit Appreciations for exceptional services rendered during operations and natural calamities. Besides, 1 Ladakh Scouts and 4 Ladakh Scouts battalions have been awarded the Chief of the Army Staff Unit Citation.

The “Nunnus” have also excelled in various winter sports, especially ice hockey. This appears to be your forte. I am pleased to hear that the majority of players in the Indian Ice Hockey Team are from the Ladakh Scouts. They contributed to the national team winning the silver medal in the recent Ice Hockey Challenge Cup of Asia. I am sure greater laurels lie ahead. In mountaineering, skiing and high altitude marathons, troops and officers from the Ladakh Scouts have won honours.

At this Colour Presentation Ceremony, I would like to pay homage to the martyrs of the Ladakh Scouts Regiment. Their blood and sacrifice has secured our sovereignty, brought glory to our nation and protected our people from harm. I also congratulate all veterans and serving soldiers of the Regiment for their adherence to duty and professional conduct. You have been true force multipliers in some of the most inhospitable terrain and climatic conditions in the world. I take this opportunity to convey my best wishes to all ranks and families of the entire Ladakh Scouts fraternity. The Indian Army and the nation is proud of you.

We have taken a solemn vow to defend the sovereignty of our country against all odds. I am confident that we will fulfil this vow and keep the dignity of our nation and our people intact, whatever the cost. That is what the ‘Colours’ signify. Carry them with pride and strive for excellence in all your endeavours.

May you walk further and further on the path of success!

Thank you

Jai Hind