

SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND AT THE SPECIAL SHOW OF CHANGE-OVER OF CEREMONIAL ARMY GUARD BATTALION

Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi. : 25-08-2017

Chief Guest Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu,

Other distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen

I am pleased to witness the change-over of the Rashtrapati Bhavan Ceremonial Army Guard from the 8th Battalion of the Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry (Siachen) to the 5th Battalion of the 1st Gorkha Rifles. This ceremony is taking place for the second time at the forecourt of Rashtrapati Bhavan, the first occasion being on April 9, 2014.

The Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry (Siachen) is one of the youngest regiments of the Indian Army. Even so, its 8th Battalion has a rich tradition of valour and bravery. It is recognised as among the “Bravest of

the Brave”, having won one Param Vir Chakra, one Ashok Chakra and one Maha Vir Chakra, among 300 gallantry and distinguished service awards. Its personnel have set the highest standards in excellence. The courage, sacrifice and devotion to duty displayed by soldiers of the battalion speak for themselves.

My heartfelt compliments to Colonel Anil Jhinjheria and his team of officers and soldiers of the 8th Battalion of the Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry (Siachen) for successfully accomplishing the tasks entrusted to them from April 2014 to August 2017.

As the Army Guard Battalion at Rashtrapati Bhavan – whether presenting arms to state guests and high officials visiting the country, or presenting arms when I depart from and arrive at Rashtrapati Bhavan – the personnel of the 8th Battalion of the Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry (Siachen) have been immaculate in their drill, turnout, bearing and discipline. Many visiting dignitaries have applauded

the rigour and professional conduct of the personnel on parade. I congratulate the battalion for its exemplary military traditions, professionalism and high standards of discipline.

Today you stand on the threshold of a new assignment. I am confident you will strive to maintain your excellence. I wish you success in all future endeavours.

I also take this opportunity to welcome to Rashtrapati Bhavan the 5th Battalion of the 1st Gorkha Rifles. The unit will be relieving the 8th Battalion of the Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry (Siachen) and taking over an extremely prestigious assignment as the ceremonial Army Guard Battalion at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

This battalion too has an illustrious history. It has won 200 gallantry and distinguished service awards, including three Maha Vir Chakras in a single battle in

the war of 1971. I am confident that the Unit will live up to its extremely high standards while discharging its duties as the Ceremonial Army Guard. I wish Colonel Vijay Uniyal and his team of officers and men of the 5th Battalion of the 1st Gorkha Rifles a successful tenure here at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

In conclusion I wish the officers, troops and families of both battalions, as well as veterans present here, the very best and a glorious future.

Jai Hind