

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
ON THE OCCASION OF PRESENTATION OF
STANDARDS TO 118 HELICOPTER UNIT AND COLOURS TO AIR
DEFENCE COLLEGE**

Air Force Station Guwahati, November 29, 2018

1. It is always a pleasure for me to visit Assam and the Northeast. I am particularly happy to be here today at Air Force Station Guwahati to award Standards to 118 Helicopter Unit and Colours to Air Defence College.
2. Both these units have distinguished themselves with stellar service to the nation. They have a rich history of professional excellence and have discharged their responsibilities with distinction. The nation honours them today for their selfless devotion, professionalism and courage in the face of adversity.
3. I have just returned from a visit to Vietnam and Australia. I held discussions with the leaders of both these countries on different areas of mutual interest such as defence, international security, trade and culture. The deliberations made one thing amply clear. That, the world looks at India differently today. India is seen as an eminent power, expected to play a prominent role in shaping the global paradigm with regards to international security, trade and commerce, and environmental protection. India's rise in the international order has many dimensions to it. And it draws heavily from the capabilities and valour of our Armed Forces.

4. Though we remain firmly committed to peace, we are determined to use all our might to protect the sovereignty of our nation. Whenever an occasion demanded, our brave men and women in uniform have ensured that the nation has dealt with the security challenges forcefully and effectively. Our armed forces, exemplified by the air warriors who stand before us, reflect our firm resolve to defend our nation.
5. I am happy to present the Standards to the 118 Helicopter Unit and the Colours to the Air Defence College today at Air Force Station Guwahati, which is one of the premier airbases of the Indian Air Force.
6. 118 Helicopter Unit or “Challengers” was formed on November 22, 1971, in Chabua and was then equipped with Mi-8 aircraft. Whether flying the Mi-8 or the formidable Mi-17 helicopter today, the Unit has a remarkable operational record. The Unit has also contributed towards humanitarian assistance and relief operations during natural disasters. The motto of the Unit *Aapatsu Mitram*, which means - Friend in Distress, is indeed an apt one. I am confident that “Challengers” will continue to excel and operate as a formidable force in the years to come.
7. The Air Defence College has achieved significant milestones in Air Defence training in the past 60 years. The college provides professional training not only to officers of Indian Air Force but also to sister services and officers from friendly countries. The flying element of the College played a vital role during the 1962, 1965 and 1971 wars. Since its establishment, the college has distinguished itself by adopting a futuristic approach towards training. The College truly lives up to its motto *Rakshanepunyasya Shikhamaha*, which means – Teach to Excel in Defence.

8. In recognition of their outstanding performance, I am pleased to award Standards to 118 Helicopter Unit and Colours to Air Defence College. I compliment the personnel and families of the Units, past and present, for their devotion and service to the nation. The Indian Air Force is a fine force known for its prowess and professionalism. With your constant readiness to protect our borders and air space, you leave every citizen feeling safe and secure. India is indeed proud of you.

Jai Hind!