

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,  
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND  
ON THE OCCASION OF CALL ON BY THE PROBATIONERS OF  
69<sup>TH</sup> BATCH OF INDIAN REVENUE SERVICE (CUSTOMS &  
CENTRAL EXCISE)**

**October 30, Rashtrapati Bhavan**

1. I extend to all of you a warm welcome to Rashtrapati Bhavan. I am happy to meet you, the probationers of the Indian Revenue Service–Customs and Central Excise. I congratulate you on your success in a highly competitive examination, and subsequent selection to the all-important Revenue Service.
2. Revenue of the state is the energy that fuels the running of the state. It is the very foundation of governance, and its importance cannot be overstated.
3. This is true not only of the modern state. We have a rich knowledge base on taxation. Chanakya’s Arthashastra has practical wisdom on the topic, and so does the Mahabharata. Chanakya says, “Taxation should not be a painful process for the people. There should be leniency and caution while deciding the tax structure. Ideally, the government should collect taxes like a honeybee which sucks just the right amount of honey from the flower so that both can survive.” Our great epic Mahabharata narrates how Yudhishtir went to Bhishma for advice on governance. The veteran statesman says, “No one likes to pay tax, but the king should make them aware of the national priorities for which funds are needed.” He also tells Yudhishtir that the king should ensure tax compliance. In our times, the state has to ensure compliance, and that is your job.
4. The IRS offers tremendous opportunities to discharge your duties, be it as a tax administrator, a law enforcement official, a government pleader, a research analyst, a faculty member, or on any other critical assignments.

5. I am told that you contribute nearly 47 percent of the total revenue to the government exchequer. Your contribution enables the country to spend resources for economic development and creation of various infrastructures, for a variety of socio-economic schemes, and for education and health services.
6. With increasing globalisation coupled with the spread of the information technology, the world is changing fast. Boundaries of nations are opening up to greater economic cooperation. On the other hand, economic challenges are also making boundaries more crucial. You are going to be the guardians of our economic frontiers.
7. Within those frontiers, with the objective of making the country more self-reliant, the government has launched the Make in India initiative. Your role with respect to it is that tax administrators should strive to provide an environment within which trade and industry can thrive.
8. Your motto with respect to international trade should be: 'Border divides, Customs connect'. This will help transform India to a 5 trillion dollar economy. Just as customs connects the global trade fraternity, the GST connects the nation as one with one tax.
9. GST is also a major economic reform which is in tune with the international tax administration regime. In implementation of the GST, you have the advantage of your age and a beginner's mind set. Since you are in learning mode, I expect that you will look at current processes and persistent problems with fresh eyes, and come up with innovations and solutions. That will be a great service to the nation.
10. Technology is, of course, an area where the young have an edge over the experienced. The government is making great use of technology to make tax collection more efficient

and less intrusive. I am sure you will put your technology skills to good use and consolidate such initiatives.

11. As you are about to begin your career, allow me to share a pertinent point with you. In various services of the government, the probationers make an extra effort to prove themselves. You try to be conscious about honesty and integrity and remain concerned about your commitment and dedication to people. You are invariably on alert against any errors. But once you get confirmed in the service, there is a risk of slackness and human weakness setting in, for asking small favours as a part of the privileges of the service. My advice to all of you is, you should never come out of the probationer's mind set, maintain your integrity and honesty and guard against any laxity.
  
12. I am confident that you will serve the nation as a disciplined officer but I also hope each of you will strive to become a good individual with high morals of whom the nation and family will be proud. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Thank you,  
Jai Hind!