

**ADDRESS BY THE HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA
SMT DROUPADI MURMU
AT DEFENCE SERVICES STAFF COLLEGE, WELLINGTON**

Wellington, November 28, 2024

It is a great pleasure to be among you all at the premier tri-service joint training institution of the country. I am impressed by the beautiful campus of Defence Services Staff College placed amidst the spectacular Nilgiris and surrounded by lush green tea gardens and rich variety of flora and fauna.

Dear officers,

I congratulate you all for getting selected through a tough competitive examination. I also welcome the 38 international student officers from 26 countries who are attending this course.

I felt happy listening to the experiences shared by the young student officers. Their determination and zeal to serve the country are commendable. I am also delighted to know that there are some women officers among you, attending this course. I hope that the number of women officers in this course will rise in the near future.

Women are already making their mark in every field including our armed forces. I was glad to meet the woman officer deployed in Siachen, the world's highest battlefield. Women officers are now commanding various units in all the three services. I am glad to know that in Indian Navy, a lady officer has been posted as commanding officer of the frontline warship for the very first time. Earlier this month, onboard INS Vikrant during my Day at sea in Goa, I met the young and energetic women Agniveers and women sailors. The increasing strength and role of women in all spheres is encouraging and inspiring for all, especially young girls. I look forward to witnessing more and more women joining armed forces, where they

can demonstrate exceptional capabilities and break new ground in uncharted territories. We must remember that women warriors have written glorious chapters of Indian history in not so distant past.

Dear officers,

The Defence Services Staff College has made commendable contribution to training and educating the potential leaders of armed forces of India and friendly foreign countries and selected civilian officers. I am happy to note that the institution has carried out constant upgradation of the infrastructure over the years, with emphasis on digitisation. Over the past seven decades, DSSC has played a major role in professionally grooming the middle level officers. It has the unique distinction of having a composite multi-service and multi-national group of student officers and a professionally enriched faculty.

The College has been at the forefront of introduction of latest technology in imparting quality training to the officers, in conformity with the best practices in similar institutions around the world. I am told that a large number of its alumni have risen to the top-most positions in the country as well as in armed forces.

Indian armed forces are respected by one and all. They are in the forefront of guarding our nation's boundaries and territorial integrity. The nation is proud of our defence forces for constantly securing our national interests. Our defence personnel who always serve with the spirit of Nation First deserve high praise. I acknowledge the contribution of their families in demonstrating immense courage while sending their loved ones out on national duty and also expressing feelings of pride about what they do for the country.

Dear officers,

India is rising and the world is acknowledging our growth in various sectors including defence. India is moving towards indigenization and self-reliance to keep the Armed Forces ready to meet the future

challenges. Our country is being developed as a major defence manufacturing hub, and is moving towards becoming a reliable defence partner and big defence exporter. India's defence industry is rapidly adopting the latest technologies and is moving ahead in line with the vision of Atma Nirbhar Bharat. Our defence companies such as HAL and organisations like DRDO are setting new benchmarks. Today, India exports defence equipment to more than 100 countries. India's defence exports grew by 30 times over the past decade. Make in India programme has played a major role in this development.

In the fast changing geopolitical environment, we need to be well prepared to tackle any situation. Geopolitical dynamics have changed the security landscape and there is a need to have deep understanding of national and global issues. We not only have to secure our national interests but also prepare for new national security challenges like cyber warfare and terrorism. The issue of climate change is acquiring new dimensions which need to be understood and managed. Updated knowledge and cutting edge technologies based on intensive research are required to be applied. I am confident that our armed forces officers will rise to the future challenges. This Course will prepare you all for higher responsibilities and as strategists who can deal with complex situations in an effective manner.

Today, officers of our friendly countries are present here. I would like to convey a message from India. India has always followed the principle of 'Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam' and considered the whole world as its friend and family. India always follows the ideal of promoting international peace and security. I again extend my warm wishes to all international student officers.

In the end, I extend my greetings to all the officers, faculty and staff of the college. My best wishes for your bright future and illustrious career!

Thank you!
Jai Hind!

Jai Bharat!