

**ADDRESS BY THE HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA
SMT DROUPADI MURMU
ON THE OCCASION OF PRESENTATION OF
PRESIDENT'S COLOUR TO INS DRONACHARYA**

Kochi, March 16, 2023

I am glad that my first visit to Kerala as President of India has brought me to Kochi to award the President's Colour to INS Dronacharya, a premier Gunnery training establishment of the Indian Navy.

As the Supreme Commander of Armed Forces, I am happy to present the President's Colour to INS Dronacharya, in recognition of the exceptional service rendered to the nation, both in war and peace.

I congratulate all personnel for their impressive turnout and well-coordinated drill today. This is a reflection of the high standards of training being imparted to you all.

I am delighted to note that this event coincides with the school completing its 80 years of dedicated service to the nation. This institute is a training establishment of international repute and a Centre for Excellence in Gunnery and Missile Warfare.

I am happy to note that personnel from para-military and police forces have also been trained at INS Dronacharya. In addition, the institute has fostered India's vision for a secure maritime region by training officers and sailors of our friendly countries as well.

I congratulate the alumni and past and present personnel who have served or trained in the institution for their hard work and dedication. I am told that the current Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Hari Kumar is also a distinguished alumnus of this school.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

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This is my second visit to a Navy establishment as the President of India. I had the honour of attending the Navy Day celebrations at Visakhapatnam with our brave Navy personnel. I also witnessed the Operational Demonstration of the Indian Navy. It demonstrated Navy's preparedness to meet any challenge and also its focus on training and operational excellence. Today, in the Southern Naval Command, I also had a glimpse of the spirit to defend the nation against all threats and protect our maritime interests.

Before coming here, I also had an opportunity to visit INS Vikrant and interact with the officers and sailors on board. The indigenously built modern aircraft carrier is a shining example of Atmanirbhar Bharat. Today, India is among select few nations with a capacity of building an aircraft carrier with indigenous technology. I congratulate the entire team of Indian Navy, Cochin Shipyard Limited and everyone associated in the journey of INS Vikrant. I am proud of the brave men and women of the Indian Navy for serving the nation with distinction and dedication.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

India has a rich maritime history. The Maritime strength remains critical to India's strategic, military, economic and commercial interests.

For a nation like India, the fifth largest economy in the world, with a long coastline, island territories and substantial seafaring population, having a strong and modern Navy is of very high importance. For the last 75 years, a combat-ready, multi-dimensional and versatile Indian Navy has not only deterred our adversaries and safeguarded our maritime interests, but also enabled creation of a peaceful periphery to facilitate socio-economic growth. The Nation is proud of the Indian Navy's commitment in protecting our maritime borders, securing our trade routes and rendering assistance during calamities.

Over the years, the Navy has developed significant capabilities to be a mission-deployed and response-ready force across the Indian Ocean Region, and be the 'First Responder' to any contingency, in our maritime neighbourhood. The country, therefore, looks up to the Navy to protect our maritime interests. Our 'women and men in whites' would need to keep themselves updated with the latest technology advancements as well as changing operational dynamics in maritime domain.

In the end, I wish the Officers and the Crew of INS Dronacharya success in future endeavours. My best wishes to all of you and your families.

Thank you.
Jai Hind!
Jai Bharat!