

## **ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE ON THE OCCASION OF PRESIDENTIAL DINNER**

OFFICERS TRAINING ACADEMY, CHENNAI : 09.09.2016

1. What a splendid evening it is today to mark your penultimate day in OTA, Chennai. I am extremely delighted to be here amongst you all. I extend my warm greetings and felicitations to the Commandant & Staff of this illustrious Academy who have been responsible for the transformation of raw youth into competent and motivated military leaders, fully committed to defend our Country from all external & internal threats at any cost.

2. The journey of OTA, Chennai which began more than five decades back in 1963 is embellished with the acts of great valour and heroism by the Alumni of this Academy, a benchmark that all of you from tomorrow onwards must strive to equal. The courage and supreme sacrifices by many brave hearts like Major Ramaswamy Parmeswaran, Param Vir Chakra (Posthumous) and more recently Maj Mukund Varadharajan, Ashok Chakra (Posthumous), amongst many other heroes, should always be your guiding light in the years ahead that lie ahead. I am indeed humbled by all those brave sons of India who made the ultimate sacrifice defending our motherland.

3. On all fronts and by any parameter The Indian Army is a thoroughly professional and formidable fighting machine, held in awe both by friends and adversaries. This achievement has been attained due to the blood, sweat and toil of your illustrious predecessors! In my personal capacity of having served long on the Treasury Benches and my tenure as the Raksha Mantri and now as your Supreme Commander I have been an integral part of the Defence Services and have proudly seen our Armed Forces grow from strength to strength.

4. The tenets of Leadership have remained constant through the two millennia of recorded history of warfare. Leadership in its pristine essence is the unquestioned and willing obedience to the leader under all circumstances irrespective of the costs and consequences. You as young and dynamic leaders of the finest soldiers in the world must always remember unquestioned leadership has to be earned by hard work and toil. It does not only come with rank and power.

5. The Officer-Men Relationship is a crucial facet in the Leadership matrix especially in today's rapidly changing socio-economic environment. Remember that the troops that you will command are the finest in the world. In addition to leading them well in Operations, it is your duty to look after their welfare and ensure the best possible quality of life for them. The power of leading by example continues to be pre-eminent. You must always 'Walk the Talk'.

6. The Indian Army today is in the midst of a transformation and needs agile, adaptive leaders with a broad perspective and wide range of skills. In an era, where you will face the full spectrum of conflict, ranging from high intensity combat, peace time soldiering, peace keeping, humanitarian intervention, counter terrorism and insurgency, low intensity conflict, all in rapid succession or even simultaneously – we cannot succeed without military leaders, who are equal

to the challenge! You will be expected to make sound and ethical decisions in operational and other difficult situations in a split second. You have to train hard to achieve this competence.

7. My compliments to the Officers Cadets from our friendly foreign countries on your successful completion of training. We have no doubt that you will be our Ambassadors in your countries in the years ahead and be instrumental in further strengthening our close relations. I have no doubt that you will carry a piece of India in your hearts when you leave our shores.

8. Finally, I wish you and the Officers Training Academy many more years of service to our Nation. I pray to the Almighty that OTA grows from strength to strength in its noblest role of training valiant and dynamic military leaders who add to the tradition of indomitable courage, dedication and self-sacrifice in safeguarding the safety and security of this great Nation. May the Almighty be always with you in all your endeavours.

Jai Hind !