

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh's customary broadcast to the Armed Forces on the eve of Independence Day 2019

Posted On: 14 AUG 2019 7:00PM by PIB Delhi

My Dear Sainik Brothers and Sisters,

The country will be celebrating 73rd Independence Day tomorrow. On this solemn occasion, I extend my heartiest greetings and best wishes to each one of you serving in the Armed Forces. I extend my greetings to all serving personnel as well as ex-servicemen of the Army, Navy, Air Force and the Coast Guard. I also extend my best wishes to the family members of our personnel, many of whom are deployed far away from their homes in mountains, jungles, deserts and even deep seas serving the country day-in, day-out.

On this auspicious occasion, my thoughts and gratitude are with the near and dear ones of all those who had laid down their lives in the line of duty. We are forever indebted to them for their supreme sacrifice.

There had been continuous demands for a separate war memorial since Independence for those who made supreme sacrifice for the country. However, due to some reason or the other the plan to construct the memorial got delayed. When our government under the able leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi came into power five years ago, our government took up the project. Eventually a befitting National War Memorial for our martyrs came up in the heart of the National Capital. It was dedicated by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on February 25.

Friends, this year we are commemorating 20 years of Kargil War. The Prime Minister while paying homage to the Martyrs said that every Indian was remembering the inspirational saga of our brave hearts for their valour and dedication to the nation. We 'remember' our martyrs by revisiting their sacrifices, we 'rejoice' by celebrating the victory in Kargil and we 'renew' our resolve to safeguard the honour of the Tricolour.

Our neighbouring country is continuously keeping a sinister eye on Jammu and Kashmir. It sends terrorists into our territory and disturbs peace in the Valley. On 14 February 2019, 40 brave jawans of CRPF were martyred in Pulwama in a suicide attack. Our Armed Forces hit back by destroying the terror launch pads with air strikes across the border in Pakistan before it could plan another Pulwama like attack.

In the new and emerging world, the battlefield is not only limited to land, air and sea but will also spread to space and cyber space. Therefore, India has to be ready for any eventuality keeping pace with technological advancements in the area. Keeping this in mind, we successfully conducted an Anti-Satellite missile test 'Mission Shakti' on March 27 this year. The DRDO-developed Ballistic Missile Defence Interceptor Missile successfully engaged an Indian orbiting target satellite in Low Earth Orbit in a 'Hit to Kill' mode. With this, India joined a select group of nations, like USA, Russia and China which possess such a capability. However, let me reiterate that defence policy of the country is for peace and stability at regional, continental and global level.

Since the Armed Forces are at the forefront of our nation's defence, I assure you that the Government will do all that is necessary to keep your morale high and to meet your functional requirements. Under the able leadership of the Prime Minister, the Armed Forces are being rapidly modernised. We are working tirelessly to achieve his vision of 'jointness' among the three wings of the Armed Forces.

My Dear Sainik Brothers and Sisters, additionally, efforts are being made to increase the participation of private sector in defence manufacturing under 'Make in India' to boost indigenisation. The 11th DefExpo

India- 2020 is scheduled to be held in Lucknow which will offer an excellent opportunity for the Indian defence industry to showcase its capabilities and promote its export potential.

The Army recently carried out summer user trials of third Generation Anti-Tank Guided Missile NAG successfully at Pokhran Field Firing Ranges. This third-generation fire and forget class missile has been developed to engage highly fortified enemy tanks in all weather conditions with day and night capabilities. The robust imaging algorithm has made the missile hit the target at four-kilometre distance even in severe summer desert conditions which is unique in its class.

The Indian Air Force successfully fired the BrahMos air version missile from its frontline Sukhoi-30 fighter aircraft in May 2019. A 500 kg class Inertial Guided Bomb was successfully flight tested in May 2019 again from Sukhoi-30. The guided bomb achieved the desired range and hit the target with high precision. The LCA Tejas made successful trial of mid-air refuelling on September 10 which is a major step towards final operational clearance.

My Dear Sainik Brothers and Sisters, we have now delegated greater financial powers to Vice Chiefs of the three Services in order to expedite the decision-making process involved in the revenue procurements. With the new delegation, the financial powers of the Vice Chiefs are increased from Rs 100 crore to Rs 500 crore. It will augment the arms and ammunition reserves of the Armed Forces.

My dear jawans, I have restored 'ration in kind' for the officers of the three-Armed Forces posted in peace areas since June. Now, all officers of the Armed Forces, including those in peace station will be getting ration. It may be noted that all the jawans are already availing it in all stations.

The government recently enhanced scholarship for the wards of Martyrs. A Janaushadhi Kendra was inaugurated at Base Hospital, Delhi Cantt in March this year. This pilot Kendra, which is in line with Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana, will benefit in the provisioning of medicines at much cheaper rate compare to market. It will later be replicated in other parts of the country. We have also opened first Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) Polyclinic at Tawang and Tenga in Arunachal Pradesh in October last year.

Our Armed Forces, including the Coast Guard have always played a key role in giving succour to the people in the times of disaster. It was no different this time, whether it was during Cyclone FANI, Gaja or Ockhi. Our officers and jawans worked tirelessly to bring smiles on the faces of sufferers.

My Dear Sainik Brothers and Sisters, with these words, I once again extend my greetings to all of you and your family members on the eve of 73rd Independence Day. Our freedom fighters fought hard against the Colonial rule so that we could live in a free India. The proud nation now looks up to you to defend its borders with best of your strength & abilities.

With these words, I once again wish you all very happy Independence Day.

Jai Hind!

ABB/Nampi/DK/Savvy

(Release ID: 1582006)