



Speech by the Hon'ble President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovind on the occasion of presentation of the President's Colour to the Submarine Arm of the Indian Navy

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1. This is my first visit to Vishakhapatnam after being elected as the President of India. This is also my first visit, in my capacity as Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, to an Indian Navy formation. I am happy to be here in the week that we celebrate Navy Day (December 4). And I am especially glad to be presenting the **President's Colour** to the Submarine Arm of the Indian Navy.
2. India is a maritime nation and has been so for thousands of years. The port town of **Lothal** can be traced back to the **Harappan** civilisation, marking the beginning of an ancient tradition of trade by sea. In later centuries, the Chola Empire and subsequently the Maratha rulers, led by Shivaji, had a well developed navy and a maritime defence strategy. Of course, these are only two examples of many that can be provided.
3. Today, our maritime interests are directly linked to India's economy and security, and to the well-being of our people. Over 90 per cent of our trade by volume uses the sea route. All this enhances the role of the Indian Navy not just in national security but in the wider process of nation building. The Navy is India's primary instrument of sea power. It is also the guardian of our maritime interests, both military and civilian.
4. The year 2017 is being commemorated as the **Golden Jubilee** of the Indian Navy's Submarine Arm. It was on this day in 1967 that the **Naval Ensign** and the National Flag were hoisted on the first Indian Naval Submarine, **Kalvari**. The scheduled commissioning of **Kalvari** in her new avatar will complete the "**Kalvari to Kalvari**" journey. It will herald a brighter future for the Submarine Arm of the Navy.
5. In the past 50 years, 25 submarines have been in commission at various points. These submarines and their crew members have been a crucial part of the Indian Navy's operations. Submarines are complex, high-technology platforms. They acquire their strength from stealth. Quietly and without much fanfare, our submarines have had major operational achievements - in the 1971 War, during Operation Vijay in 1999, and then Operation Parakram, 2002. To date, 17 submarines of the Navy have been awarded the Chief of Naval Staff's "Unit Citation" for exceptional service.
6. I am happy to note that submarine technology is part of the government's "Make in India" programme. This will strengthen our capabilities in the years to come.

Ladies and Gentlemen

7. The sea is an unforgiving medium for those who do not respect it. No one knows this better than the valiant submariners of the Indian Navy, who operate their boats and perform their duties beneath the waves. All of you carry out your professional responsibilities with great skill and at grave risk. The nation is proud of your achievements and appreciates your contribution to national security.
8. Submariners of the Indian Navy have excelled in sports and adventure expeditions as well. In 2004, the first successful Indian Naval expedition to Mount Everest was led by a submariner and comprised mainly submariners. The "Submarine Song", the tune of which you marched to a while ago, has been composed by a serving officer of the Submarine Arm. Indeed, our submariners are multi-talented.
9. The **President's Colour** is being presented today to the Submarine Arm of the Indian Navy in recognition of extraordinary service to the nation, in peace and war, in the past 50 years. I congratulate you on this achievement. You are a special community and all submariners, past and present, share a special bond. I am happy to learn that the first Captain of the Indian Navy's Submarine Arm, Commodore K.S. Subramanian, now in his nineties, has travelled from the United States to be here today. Many of his crew colleagues from a half-century ago are with us. I compliment them and their pioneering spirit.
10. I also pay homage to those Indian Navy submariners who have laid down their lives in the service of India. And finally I would like to acknowledge the sacrifice of the families of submariners- past and present. In their own way, they have all contributed to the nation.
11. In conclusion, I wish the Submarine Arm of the Indian Navy the very best for the future. May you ever rule the waters. And may Varuna, the Lord of the Oceans, ever be auspicious unto you.

Thank you

Jai Hind!

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