

**ADDRESS BY THE HON'BLE PRESIDENT OF INDIA
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
ON THE OCCASION OF PRESIDENTIAL FLEET REVIEW - 2022**

Visakhapatnam, February 21, 2022

It gives me great pleasure to be here with you today. I am pleased to review the readiness of the Indian naval ships, submarines, aircraft and other elements of our maritime power today. The excellent parade of ships, aircraft and submarines showcases the professional competence and determination of the maritime services of the nation. The parade also showcases the preparedness of the Indian Navy for any contingency.

This beautiful city of Visakhapatnam, also popularly known as Vizag, has been an important port for centuries. Historically, it has been known as a crucial hub of trans-national trade and commerce. From the sixth century Before Common Era to the 21st century, Vizag continues to be an important centre for industry and economy. Its strategic importance is underlined by the fact that the headquarters of the Eastern Naval Command of the Indian Navy is located here.

Vizag made a glorious contribution during the 1971 war. The Golden Jubilee Celebrations of India's victory in that war, under 'Swarnim Vijay Varsh', concluded recently. I recall the heroic action of the Eastern Naval Command in the naval blockade of the then East Pakistan and the sinking of Pakistan's submarine 'Ghazi'. That was a decisive blow to Pakistan. The 1971 war remains one of the most emphatic victories in our history.

Officers and sailors,

India believes in 'Security and Growth for All in the Region' to focus on cooperative measures for sustainable use of oceans. A large part of global trade flows through the Indian Ocean Region. A significant portion of our trade and energy needs are met through the oceans. Safety of the seas and of the maritime commons, therefore, remains a critical requirement. The Indian Navy's constant vigil, prompt response to incidents and untiring efforts have been highly successful in this regard.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Indian Navy has been providing aid to friendly nations by supplying medicines and evacuating stranded Indian citizens and foreign nationals in different parts of the world under 'Mission SAGAR' and 'Samudra Setu'. The prompt and effective deployment of the Indian Navy in the times of crisis has underscored India's vision of being the 'Preferred Security Partner' and 'First Responder' in the Indian Ocean Region.

Officers and sailors,

I am happy to note that the Indian Navy is becoming increasingly self-reliant and has been at the forefront of the 'Make in India' initiative. I am told that about 70 per cent of the contents of several warships and submarines under construction in various public and private shipyards across the country are indigenous. It is a matter of great pride that India has built nuclear submarines and soon we will have our indigenously built aircraft carrier, 'Vikrant', joining the service. I was happy to inspect 'Vikrant' during my visit to Kochi in December last year. The development of indigenous naval shipbuilding capabilities is an impressive contribution to the making of an 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'.

The Indian Navy regularly engages with a large number of other navies of the world through bilateral and multilateral exercises. The aim is to enhance interoperability, gain from best practices, develop common understanding and build mutual confidence to address maritime issues. In this regard, I convey my best wishes for the forthcoming Multinational Naval Exercise — MILAN 2022.

I congratulate the Indian Navy for the splendid conduct of this historic event, overcoming all challenges and restrictions imposed by the pandemic. I also compliment the Government of Andhra Pradesh as well as the administration and citizens of Visakhapatnam for extending all support to the Navy for conducting this fleet review. As the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, this is a moment of immense satisfaction for me. The nation is proud of our brave navy personnel. My best wishes to the Indian Navy for safeguarding our national interests.

**Thank you,
Jai Hind!**