

**SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB  
MUKHERJEE AT THE PRESENTATION OF 'STANDARD' TO  
125 HELICOPTER SQUADRON AND 'COLOURS' TO  
MECHANICAL TRAINING INSTITUTE OF INDIAN AIR FORCE**

**Air Force Station, Tambaram, Tamil Nadu: 03-03-2017**

1. It gives me immense pleasure to be here today at Air Force Station Tambaram, one of the oldest establishments of the Indian Air Force, to award the President's 'Standard' to 125 Helicopter Squadron and 'Colours' to Mechanical Training Institute. These units have a glorious past, embedded with rich heritage, stellar efforts and selfless service to the Nation. For their unflinching devotion, professionalism, ethos and courage, the Nation honours them today with a deep sense of gratitude and appreciation.

2. India is a responsible and emerging power in a multipolar, multilateral world. The ever changing socio-economic and geo-political scenario in our region of influence demands a strong deterrent against those with nefarious designs to affect the progress, prosperity and security of our Nation. Apart from providing deterrence against inimical entities, both external and internal, our Armed Forces have been at the forefront of providing succour to our citizens during natural calamities. The operations by the Indian Air Force during floods in Uttarakhand, J&K Valley and in Tamil Nadu deserve special mention and will always be remembered by the entire Nation. The relentless and selfless operations showcase the fortitude and determination of its gallant air warriors.

3. The Indian Air Force has evolved into a technologically advanced entity whilst safeguarding the sovereignty of our Nation. The resilience and tenacity displayed by the air warriors is worthy of emulation by the youth of our country.

4. 125 Helicopter Squadron (GLADIATORS) since its formation in November 1983 has enhanced its operational capability over the years. The Squadron motto is 'Balidanam Veerasya Bhushanam' meaning, 'Sacrifice is the Ornament of the Brave'. The Gladiators have earned accolades for their valour and strike capabilities when deployed internally as well as abroad. The sobriquets 'Mudalai' and 'Mamba' are two such accolades earned by the squadron during its overseas operations. When deployed under the UN Flag in Sierra Leone, the Gladiators were instrumental in securing the release of 232 captured Indian Army personnel. In January 2016, the Squadron played a stellar role in confining the terrorists to a restricted area during the terror attack on Air Force Station Pathankot, thereby reducing casualties. The Gladiators have stood the test of time by rising to the myriad challenges in times of need.

5. The Mechanical Training Institute at Air Force Station Tambaram is the oldest Technical Training Institute of the IAF. The Institute, raised in 1935, has undergone changes in nomenclature as well as locations over the years and was rechristened as Mechanical Training Institute in 1980. The unit imparts fundamental Technical Training in aircraft maintenance and servicing to the young recruits in mechanical aviation trades. The tradesmen so trained are the backbone of the maintenance arm of the IAF ensuring its operational capability and effectiveness. The training imparted and the ethos instilled at the Institute, empowers the air warriors to keep abreast with the state-of-the-art technology used in modern weapon platforms. The Unit has always stood by its motto '**Abhyasah Siddhikaranam**' which means '**Practice Leads to Perfection**'. The Institute strives to lay the foundation for continuous development of technical competence in Mechanical Aviation trades.

6. The air warriors who stand before us today, epitomise grit and dedication in fulfilling their responsibilities towards the Nation by upholding the highest standards of service ethos. I take this opportunity to congratulate all the air warriors for their smart turn out and sharp drill movements.

7. In awarding the 'Standard' to 125 Helicopter Squadron and 'Colours' to Mechanical Training Institute, I compliment the personnel and families of the recipient units, both serving and retired, whose sustained commitment and professionalism have stood our nation in good stead. The Nation is indeed proud of you. I wish you all the very best for a glorious future.

**JAI HIND!**