

**SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE
AT THE PRESENTATION OF RASHTRAPATI
SCOUT/GUIDE/ROVER/RANGER AND
ADULT LEADER AWARD CERTIFICATES FOR THE YEAR 2013**

Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi : February 16, 2015

1. I am, indeed, very happy to be amidst you this morning and to welcome you to the historic Darbar Hall to participate in today's award ceremony.
2. The tradition of the Rashtrapati Award Certificates has continued since 1961, when my illustrious predecessor, and the First President of India, Dr Rajendra Prasad, associated himself with The Bharat Scouts and Guides organisation. The due recognition of the highest achievers, at this award ceremony, has always inspired generations of scouts and guides towards giving their best for community-service and nation-building.
3. The founding-father of Scouts and Guides, Lord Baden Powell, started the movement in our country in 1909, a mere two years after the first experimental Scouting Camp at the Brown Sea Island in Great Britain. Being a voluntary, non-political and educational movement for young people, bereft totally of any distinction in terms of race or creed, the Scout/Guide Promise of '*doing one's duty to God and Country, and*

service to fellow beings' will forever ingrain, in each one of you, the timeless virtues of mutual respect and universal brotherhood. Therefore, veritably, the participation in this movement enables all of you to realise your own intellectual, physical and spiritual potential.

4. Today, I am especially happy to note that your dedication and purposeful activities, at such a tender age, are paving the way for national integration as well as international harmony in equal measure. I take this opportunity to convey my simple message to you all; that, 'the country stands proud of each one of you'.

5. My dear young friends, ladies and gentlemen, as the world becomes increasingly globalised, we are, only too aware of the rampant social conflicts that threaten the continued well-being of all citizens. Our nation is going through an unprecedented demographic transformation. In another five years' time, the average age of an Indian would be 29 years! The statistical fact is not only indicative of how important it is, for the country, to focus on the aspirations of our youth; but equally, for each one of my young friends here, and across the country, to strive and become the much-needed 'agents of change'. The Bharat Scouts and Guides can be the perpetual platform to nurture leadership at the grassroots level, precisely as needed.

6. I will like to draw your attention to the recently-launched ‘*Swachh Bharat Abhiyan*’, the pan-India movement that is truly based on ‘dignity of labour’, a value that was so dear to Mahatma Gandhi. It is my firm belief that The Bharat Scouts and Guides stands poised to inculcate the basic sense of self-confidence, self-reliance and passion for national duty in each and every one of you.

7. Young friends, as a message of sagacity, I would only emphasise, that we must seek the measures to create a higher standard of social order. Each one of us must be mindful of the sensitivities of those around us, and the effect of our words and actions on them. We must collectively preserve the core values of pluralism and secularism that have served, over the years, to safeguard the fabric of our society. “The Bharat Scouts and Guides” must infuse a greater sense of tolerance in young minds, whilst allowing them to summarily reject any divisive agenda.

8. It is with a sense of great satisfaction that I note the wide spectrum of activities The Bharat Scouts and Guides have been engaged in over the past years. The efforts and the events have encompassed humanitarian aid during natural calamities, social campaigns to combat disease and debilitating habits, community workshops for skill-development, joint activities related to Millennium Development Goals, and participation in international meets. I thank

each and every member of the organisation for the selfless services rendered that not only bring succour to the deprived and the needy, but also enhance the reputation of our country in the eyes of the international community.

9. Dear young friends, in the end, I would like to take the opportunity to underscore the apt words of the vision-statement of The Bharat Scouts and Guides, and I quote, 'By 2024, The Bharat Scouts and Guides will be a globally-visible, consistently-growing and self-reliant premium youth movement that is gender-balanced, vibrant and responsive to trends.' With these words, I once again, congratulate the award winners, including the Adult Leaders, of The Bharat Scouts and Guides. May your meritorious service be the lodestar for others to follow suit in the coming years.

Thank you.

Jai Hind.