

SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT ON THE PRESENTATION OF
PRESIDENTIAL STANDARD TO 220 SQUADRON AND 32 SQUADRON
OF THE INDIAN AIR FORCE

Halwara, Punjab : 20-11-2013

1. It is indeed a privilege for me to be present amidst you at Air Force Station, Halwara to award Standards to 32 Squadron and 220 Squadron. Both these flying units have a distinguished record of service to our great nation. Their long history of valour and sacrifice bears testimony to the highest standards of professionalism and excellence that are the hallmark of the Indian Air Force. With a deep sense of gratitude and heartfelt appreciation, the nation honours them today for their selfless devotion and exceptional service.

2. The Indian Air Force has played a pivotal role in the defence of our nation. In the 81 years of its existence, Indian Air Force has zealously guarded our sovereign skies while promptly providing humanitarian aid during natural disasters within our borders and beyond. Not only in India but in large number of countries IAF has provided succour, relief and humanitarian aid during natural disasters. The massive relief operations undertaken by the Indian Air Force during the Uttarakhand disaster presented yet another shining example of the fortitude and determination of its gallant air warriors. The nation is immensely proud of its Air Force and remains eternally indebted to the air warriors for their selflessness and sacrifice.

3. As a responsible nation, India is firmly committed to peace and equality. The nation is striving hard for all-round economic growth and social empowerment of its citizens. However, we remain equally focused on building the capacity to defend our sovereignty and territorial integrity. Our Armed Forces give us the confidence in the nation's ability to face any aggression and safeguard its interests. Returning victorious on every occasion, our Jawans, Sailors and Air Warriors have always shown outstanding courage and resolve in the discharge of their duties. I place on record my deepest appreciation for their devotion to duty and professionalism.

4. As an important pillar of our defence preparedness, the Indian Air Force has always risen to the occasion admirably and ensured a fitting response to any threat to our national security. The brave men and women in blue have displayed tremendous courage and determination, acquitting themselves with great élan time and again. They have earned the admiration and respect of a grateful

nation as they continue to drive IAF's ongoing transformation with their steadfast dedication and commitment. Indeed, the impeccable drill, turnout and discipline of the air warriors on parade today symbolizes the rich traditions and high morale of the Indian Air Force.

5. Ladies and Gentlemen, 32 Squadron has a glorious operational history to its credit. It was formed at Adampur in Oct 1963 with Mystere aircraft in its inventory. During the 1965 and 1971 wars, the squadron flew counter air and strike missions against numerous targets in the enemy territory. The valiant Thunderbirds also provided air defence cover to our ground offensive as well as to important locations in our territory. The personnel of 32 Squadron were decorated with several gallantry awards for their courage and valour. Bearing true allegiance to their motto "**Maha Vegashch Dridhvratah**", which means '**fast in speed and firm in determination**' the Thunderbirds accomplished remarkable operational feats while operating Mystere, Vampire, Sukhoi-7, MiG-21 Bis and BISON aircraft. I am confident that the squadron will continue to grow from strength to strength in the coming years.

6. 220 Squadron, which was formed at Pune in Jan 1963, was equipped with the venerable Vampire aircraft. The Squadron actively participated in both the 1965 and 1971 wars, undertaking major Ground Attack missions in support of Army's ground offensive as well as ensuring Air Defence of vital installations in their allotted sectors. The remarkable performance of the Desert Tigers during these operations was acknowledged with the squadron winning numerous gallantry awards. I am happy to note that the squadron has made outstanding contributions in sustaining a very high operational potential while operating Vampire, Marut and MiG-23 BN aircraft. After being number plated for six years, the Squadron was resurrected in Sep 2011 with the state-of-the-art Su-30 MKI aircraft in its inventory. I am confident that the squadron will abide with its motto of "**Shauryam Tejo Dhritih**", which means '**valour, energy and firmness**' and continue to excel in its task of securing the skies in the vital Northern sector.

7. In acknowledgement and recognition of their outstanding performance, I am pleased to award Standards to 32 Squadron and 220 Squadron. On this occasion I take the opportunity to compliment the personnel and families of 32 Squadron and 220 Squadron for their selfless sacrifice and service to the nation. The nation is indeed proud of you. I wish you and your families the very best and glorious future.

'Jai Hind'