

**SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE AT  
THE PRESENTATION OF PRESIDENTIAL STANDARD TO 25 SQUADRON  
AND 33 SQUADRON OF THE INDIAN AIR FORCE**

Air Force Station, Sulur, Tamil Nadu: 18-12-2012

Shri K. Rosaiah, Governor of Tamil Nadu, Air Chief Marshal N.A.K. Browne, Chief of the Air Staff, air warriors of the Indian Air Force, and distinguished guests.

2. It gives me immense pleasure to be here today at Sulur, to award Standards to 25 Squadron and 33 Squadron of the Indian Air Force. Both these flying units have a rich tradition of valour and courage and have rendered distinguished service to the nation since their inception. Their personnel, both past and present, have set the highest standards in pursuit of excellence that others would do well to emulate. For their selfless devotion, professionalism and courage in the face of adversity, the nation honours them today.

3. The Indian Air Force has won many laurels in the defence of our nation. Beginning its existence over 80 years ago in the pre-independence era, the Indian Air Force has today grown into one of the most powerful and professional forces in the world, capable of facing any threat to our national integrity.

4. The operational capability of the Indian Air Force constitutes an important cutting edge of the nation's military strength. Since we gained independence, the Indian Air Force, besides safeguarding the sovereignty of our nation, has always been available to provide humanitarian

assistance during disasters both within and outside the nation. I do remember that, the Air Force had flown relief supply in 2005 to a place as far as the US when Katrina had struck New Orleans. In 2008, the Indian Air Force flew relief supplies to earthquake hit South-western province of Sichuan in China.

5. India stands for peace and its foreign policy is focused on the achievement of this objective. Therefore, effective deterrence is the cornerstone of our defence policy. But effective deterrence requires the maintenance of a force that can be called upon at any time, to secure the sovereignty of our nation. Our armed force, of which the men and women who stand before us, symbolizes, this capability.

6. The courage and determination of our air warriors is a matter of pride for the nation. They have earned it by their performance during multi-national exercises within India and abroad. The Air Force of some of the most advanced nations have also marveled at the technical and tactical capability of our men and women. This has been achieved through a disciplined and strenuous training regime. Our air warriors have also been selected to be a part of U.N. peacekeeping missions. This is a testimony to your capabilities, discipline and excellence.

7. The 25 Squadron, "The Himalayan Eagles", has been the lifeline of the armed forces, personnel and citizens in the Northern Frontiers for over five decades, in times of peace as well as war. It has been a pillar of support in providing security and succor, besides playing a critical role in development of J&K and the entire northern region.

8. During the 1965 and 1971 wars and Kargil Operations, the aircraft of the 25 Squadron had even in the face of heavy odds, airlifted critical supplies for the troops and performed some very important operations. The Squadron has provided swift relief to fellow citizens in almost all natural calamities including Bhuj earthquake and Tsunami relief. The performance of the 25 Squadron in national and international exercises is a result of high standards of professionalism attained by the squadron personnel. The unit has, thus, been truly living up to its motto of “SATVADHINA (सत्वाधिना) HI (ही) SIDDHAYA (सिद्धया)” or “EXCELLENCE THROUGH DILIGENCE”.

9. The 33 Squadron is a premier Transport squadron of the Indian Air Force. The Squadron participated in both 1965 and 1971 wars. The Squadron played a major role in the Indian Peace Keeping Force operations in Sri Lanka in 1989. After tsunami struck our island territories, the personnel of 33 Squadron flew extensive relief operations, bringing much needed respite to the local populace.

10. The Squadron has also been maintaining an effective air bridge to our island territories. The Squadron has always lived up to its motto “SHRAMO (श्रमो) DADATI (ददाती) SIDDHIM (सिद्धिम्)” which translates to “HARD WORK LEADS TO ACHIEVEMENT”. I am confident that the squadron will continue to attain greater heights of glory in the years to come.

11. It was extremely heartening to see the high standards of parade displayed by the air warriors of both the squadrons. My compliments to all of you.

12. In acknowledgement and recognition of their outstanding performance over the years, I award the President's Standard to 25 Squadron and 33 Squadron. I take this opportunity to acknowledge and compliment the personnel and families of both these squadrons, both past and present, for their continued sacrifice and service to the nation. The nation is indeed proud of you. I wish you all the best for a glorious future.

Jai Hind.