

**CNS Address at Skill Certification and Induction Ceremony at
DRDO Bhavan on 18 November 2016**

1. Shri Manohar Parikkar, the Hon'ble Raksha Mantri, Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy, Hon'ble Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Secretaries from the Ministries of Defence, Shipping and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (SDE), Secretary DDR&D, Flag Officer Commanding in Chief Southern Naval Command, Vice Chief of Naval Staff, Director General (Naval Systems and Material), Flag Officers, civil and military dignitaries, friends from the media, ladies and gentlemen.

2. It is indeed a happy occasion today, because two critical elements of Naval combat are being empowered at the same time. By this I mean our personnel by development of their skills; and our combat capability- by the induction of advanced naval systems.

3. During his maiden Independence-day speech in 2014, the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi had presented his vision for the youth of India. He said "We are a youthful nation. Our youth are our Strength. The World and India need a skilled workforce. Let our youth get skills... those skills that contribute towards a strong India".

4. By 2020, India is set to become the world's youngest country with 64% of its population in the working age group. When viewed alongside the current trends of urbanisation, it is evident that we are experiencing an unprecedented demographic dividend. The Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision empowers this demographic constituency.

5. In this context it is imperative that the gaps between skills and formal education be bridged earnestly and expeditiously. Only then

would India's youth command professional acceptance and compensation at par with their international peers.

6. Drawing inspiration from the national initiative, the Indian Navy has put in place measures to make this vision a reality. We are all proud that the skill certification of the 'Pilot Batch' of our retiring sailors has been successfully completed.

7. The Principal Director of Ex-Servicemen Affairs just brought out the Indian Navy's journey since inception of the programme to this significant milestone. The focal point of all our efforts is to empower our retiring sailors so that they positively contribute and influence our society.

8. Ladies and Gentlemen, about 3,000 sailors retire annually after gaining valuable work experience in the Indian Navy. These veterans are trained through their service to remain abreast of evolving technology and upgrade their skill sets. In order to make this training holistic, both 'formal' and 'on job' training is regularly undertaken.

9. The skill certification of our sailors and the model evolved by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) is indeed unique. It qualifies our retiring sailors in conformance with National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF). The recipients therefore, have qualified standards set by the same industry that will seek their services. This acknowledgement will go a long way to integrate our highly skilled and experienced sailors with the industry.

10. Consultations with the National Skill Development Council and Sector Skill Councils, during the skill mapping initiative for our 'Pilot Batch', revealed that naval training for six job profiles was completely adequate and compatible to the civil sector. There were no gaps to be bridged. This is indicative of a balanced, robust and evolving training

curriculum adopted by our Navy. I am certain that the resulting seamless integration will enhance the skill pool in our resurgent economy and contribute substantially to nation – building.

11. Coming to the second aspect; Ladies and Gentlemen, nation building and economic resurgence needs the promise of peace and stability. Armed Forces, including the Indian Navy are mandated to make good this promise. Empowering the Armed Forces with technology is as important as empowering its people with opportunities. Towards this, the consistent and exemplary performance by the Naval Physical Oceanographic Laboratory (NPOL) is commendable.

12. From the first indigenous sonar, APSOH to HUMSA, HUMSA (NG) and now the HUMSA (UG), advances by NPOL have been commensurate with the Navy's underwater aspirations. Today we will witness induction of several underwater systems developed indigenously by NPOL. This induction marks yet another milestone in the nation's indigenisation efforts and the Navy's commitment to our national aim of 'Make in India'.

13. These successes serve to remind us of one important fact. The threat to our fleet at sea as well as assets ashore will increasingly come from underwater. Our partnership in developing this crucial area of underwater systems should progress further and keep pace with the emerging demands of modern combat. Indigenisation and strategic skilling should go hand in hand to ensure that the superiority in the battle field, is maintained and strengthened.

14. The Indian Navy could not have achieved this significant milestone of skill certification, without the active participation and wholehearted support by the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.

15. For their co-operation and guidance, we are grateful to National Skill Development Corporation and the respective Skill Councils of Healthcare, Electronics, IT and Retail Industries. I am confident that experience gained from the Pilot Batch would enable us to streamline this process in the forthcoming iterations and strengthen this initiative in the years to come.

16. We are also grateful to the scientists of DRDO and NPOL for offering strength and confidence to the man at sea by continuously developing state of the art underwater systems.

17. I would also like to thank the Hon'ble Raksha Mantri and the Hon'ble Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship for their gracious presence on this landmark occasion for the Indian Navy.

18. I take this opportunity to congratulate Headquarters Southern Naval Command, associated training schools and the Bureau of Sailors for achieving the milestone of skill certification.

19. Congratulations to 'Team NPOL' and all Naval Agencies including our field units who have steered, co-ordinated and enabled successful trials and acceptance of these systems.

20. Finally, my heartiest congratulations to all personnel who have successfully completed the course. On behalf of the Navy I wish you and your families, good health, happiness and success in all your future endeavours.

Jai Hind