

**CNS Address at Flag-in Ceremony for Mt Everest Expedition on 08
June 2017**

1. Ladies and gentlemen.
2. It gives me great pleasure to be present here today for the flag-in ceremony for the Indian Navy's Mount Everest Expedition – 17.
3. At the outset, I would like to congratulate each and every member of the Indian Navy's Mt Everest Team for their successful expedition to the highest peak in the world. As is evident from their presentation, it was a tough and challenging climb due to the inhospitable terrain, the threat of avalanches and the adverse weather conditions encountered. But then, the very purpose of undertaking extreme mountaineering is to develop the ability to face and successfully overcome such challenges.
4. It is indeed a matter of pride for all of us that our men in white uniform, who sail the high seas, have once again proved that with their grit and determination they can overcome any challenge, be it on land, sea, air or even below the surface of the sea.
Importance of Sports and Adventure
5. "Sports do not build character, they reveal it," goes a famous saying. I firmly believe that outstanding achievements in sports and adventure activities sharpen and expand the physical and mental fitness of men and women in the Services.
6. Adventure activities, like mountaineering, help in developing war winning attributes of courage, determination, endurance, teamwork, self-confidence, esprit-de-corps and, most importantly, the ability to face extremely adverse conditions with a calm mind and a resolute will.

7. The Indian Navy has always placed special emphasis on mountaineering. The varying conditions and vagaries of nature make each situation and challenge in mountaineering unique. The ability of a mountaineer to take instant decisions based on his knowledge, skill and experience is tested to its limit during such expeditions. In fact, very few sports test the character, stamina and mental endurance as mountaineering does.

8. Many of you would be aware that the first successful Indian expedition which conquered Mt Everest in 1965 was led by an Indian Naval officer, the legendary Capt MS Kohli. It was on 20 Mar 1965 under his leadership that India became the fourth nation to conquer the highest peak in the world. The momentous occasion gave the nation and the Indian Navy the privilege of flying the national flag and the naval ensign on the summit of Mount Everest for the very first time. We are indeed privileged to have him amongst us here today (TBC). Ladies and Gentlemen, May I request you join me in giving a big hand to the ace mountaineer who showed us that the mighty Everest is just 'One More Step' away!

9. Today's ceremony marks the successful culmination of the Indian Navy's Mount Everest Expedition -17 aptly titled - 'Sagar Tal se Sagar Matha'. The journey which began in 2015, saw our naval mountaineers summit eight mountains as they prepared to scale the highest peak. I vividly remember the excitement that each of the 24 members were exuding when I flagged them off on 23 March, this year. Today, it is indeed gratifying to see their beaming smiles and the sense of achievement on their proud faces.

10. I would once again like to congratulate each member of the team for their superhuman effort. I also take this opportunity to thank the

support given by all agencies, both within the Navy and outside, to make 'Sagar Tal se Sagar Matha' a 'summiting experience'.

11. Thank you!