

**SPEECH BY HER EXCELLENCY ON THE OCCASION OF
PASSING OUT PARADE OF RECRUITS AT
BENGAL ENGINEER GROUP & CENTRE, ROORKEE**

MARCH 13, 2012

1. I am honoured to be here this morning in the company of the officers, JCOs, Gallant soldiers and families of the Bengal Sappers. I congratulate each one of you on the impressive parade and the immaculate turnout displayed.
2. The Bengal Sappers have served the nation for the last 209 years. They have carved a distinct name for themselves not only in the annals of the Corps of Engineers, but also the Indian Army. History is replete with examples of sacrifices of the brave Bengal Sappers who have made seemingly impossible tasks possible. The storming of the Ghazni Fort on 23 July 1839 by Subedar Devi Singh and 12 other Ranks and the consequent award of 'Indian Order of Merit', the highest Award of Bravery at that time, aptly signifies your rich history and heritage. These Bengal Sappers were the first Indian recipients of any Gallantry Award instituted by the then Government of India.
3. Post Independence, the Bengal Sappers have actively contributed in maintaining the integrity and sovereignty of the nation. The Award of numerous battle honours, theatre honours, unit citations and Gallantry

Awards in war, in counter insurgency operations and in peace are a proof of your dedication and devotion to duty.

4. The contribution of the Bengal Sappers to the development of infrastructure for the Defence Forces cannot go unnoticed. You were involved in the construction of the highest air field at Chushul during the 1962 operations. Recently, your units have operationalised the Nyoma Advance Landing Ground in Ladakh. The involvement of Bengal Sapper units in construction of habitat, permanent defences and execution of operational works in difficult and hostile terrain under enemy fire is a fine example of your bravery and commitment.
5. Besides this, the Bengal Sappers have been at the forefront of nation building as well. You have the sole privilege of having been involved in the conduct of both the nuclear tests in 1974 and 1998. Besides, you were the first to be awarded the President colours in 1989 amongst all Sappers which is a singular honour. The Bengal Sapper units have been involved in disaster management and disaster mitigation, and aid to civil authorities in times of national calamities. Your contribution towards flood relief operations in different parts of the country, the tsunami in 2004, the earthquakes in Bhuj and Jammu & Kashmir and the Leh cloud burst calamity are well known and appreciated. It is evident from the assistance provided by you during last years Kumbh Mela and flood relief operations in Haridwar District and nearby places that Bengal Sappers play a significant role in nation building.

6. You have also been excelling in the sporting arena at all levels. Eleven Arjuna Awards earned by your sportsmen are the maximum by any single organization in the country, which is an apt reflection of your domination in the field of sports. You have been consistently standing first in many sports disciplines at various levels and have carved out a distinct sporting identity for yourselves.
7. As you pass out of this Centre today, after completion of your training, you go out to join your units. In the last two years you have been trained in the various skills required by a soldier. Now, you will be tested in the application of these skills to carry out difficult tasks, which will be given to your units. You must carry out all such tasks with dedication and devotion. The entire nation has placed its hopes in you. I am confident that you will prove your worth in the duties, which will be entrusted to you. You must draw inspiration from the Bengal Sappers motto of “Ekta, Seva, Ilam, Dridhta Evam Shoorveerta” and maintain the glorious traditions of sacrifice and service to the nation. I congratulate you and wish you well.
8. I take this opportunity to also congratulate all ranks of the Bengal Sappers. I am sure that you will continue to do the Indian Army and the nation proud. And to the Parents and families of the men passing out, I say, you have placed your sons at the service of the motherland – may their achievements be your satisfaction and pride.

Thank You

Jai Hind