

Raksha Mantri reviews Combined Graduation Parade of 217 Course at Air Force Academy, Dundigal

231 Flight Cadets, including first batch of women NDA entrants, commissioned as officers in Indian Air Force

Remain vigilant to emerging challenges & re-calibrate responses as the situation demands: RM to graduating cadets

“Adapt, adopt & modify the futuristic tech and strategies to gain decisive edge”

IAF has consistently served as both a shield and a sword for the nation, says Shri Rajnath Singh

“Growing Nari Shakti will further strengthen IAF and make it more robust & balanced”

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A total of 231 Flight Cadets (194 men & 37 women), including the first batch of women from the National Defence Academy, were commissioned as officers in the Indian Air Force (IAF) following their graduation from the Air Force Academy (AFA), Dundigal, Hyderabad on June 13, 2026. Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh reviewed the Combined Graduation Parade of 217 Course, and awarded the 'President's Commission' to the graduating cadets, marking the culmination of the pre-commissioning training of the cadets for the Flying and Ground Duty branches of IAF.







Nine (09) officers from the Indian Navy, 03 from the Indian Coast Guard and 02 from the Socialist Republic of Vietnam were awarded 'Wings' on the occasion. 'Brevets' were given to 03 officers upon the completion of their navigation training.

Congratulating the graduating cadets, Raksha Mantri stated that they are joining a service which has consistently served as both a shield and a sword for the nation. “IAF altered the course of the 1947-48 war in Kashmir through the Srinagar airlift and scripted history in just 13 days with decisive air strikes during the 1971 war. Their indomitable spirit and unmatched valour were demonstrated during 2025 Operation Sindoor when they destroyed terror hideouts with clarity and precision. The operation was successfully executed not only by our indigenous platforms, but also due to IAF’s trained, courageous, and disciplined officers. I am confident that it will continue to play a pivotal role in future operations as well,” he said.



Shri Rajnath Singh called upon the officers to remain constantly vigilant to the emerging challenges and re-calibrate their responses as the situation demands. “Warfare traditionally involves two vectors: the soldier and their equipment. However, in modern warfare, neither the adversary is often visible nor the weapon being used. Systems such as radars, satellites, drones, sensors, and robotics make it impossible to detect the combatant or their machinery. There are scenarios where adversaries' traffic systems and even CCTV networks are being compromised and controlled. Your training programmes and exercises have prepared you well to face uncertainties and unexpected challenges. You must always stay alert,” he said.

Raksha Mantri exhorted the graduating cadets to understand, adapt, adopt and when necessary modify the futuristic warfare systems and strategies. He stressed the need to innovate, execute, and gain a decisive edge on all fronts. “Every conflict serves as a learning opportunity. You must combine hard work with smart work and brilliance. In the present era, smart nations are carving out a significant place for themselves in the field of technology. It was, earlier, believed that major powers hold a decisive edge on every front, but today even comparatively smaller powers inflict massive damage on large platforms using compact yet lethal weapons and novel tactics,” he added.



Shri Rajnath Singh urged the officers to never cease learning and training, emphasising that the ‘wings’ on their shoulders are not merely a badge, but a symbol of trust of every Indian. “The responsibility you are about to shoulder is inherently so complex that you will often have to make decisions not in minutes, but in seconds or even less. You must consistently uphold such high standards of professionalism and conduct that inspire others,” he said.

Extending special congratulations to women officers, Raksha Mantri stated that the growing presence of Nari Shakti will further strengthen IAF, making it more robust and balanced. “This demonstrates the strength of our inclusive force,” he said. He also wished success to the graduating Vietnamese cadets in their future endeavours, exuding confidence that their training will bolster the friendship between the two countries.



Shri Rajnath Singh commended the IAF for playing a pivotal role in successfully executing numerous rescue missions within the country and abroad, reflecting Indian culture and ethos of aiding all of humanity, transcending nationality, language, or borders.

“It is often said that ‘the sky is the limit’. It certainly holds true for IAF, but you must move forward with the vision of ‘the sky is our home’. This very vision will help in making us Viksit Bharat by 2047,” he said while concluding his address.





The Reviewing Officer was presented with a General Salute by the parade followed by an impressive march past. The parade was interspersed with a well-coordinated and synchronised flypast led by Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal AP Singh. The flypast showcased four types of trainer aircraft viz. Pilatus PC-7 Mk II, Hawk, Kiran, and Chetak aircraft.

The parade culminated with the newly commissioned officers marching out in two columns to the resonant notes of martial marching tunes, wherein the first salute was given to them by their immediate juniors.



In recognition of their exceptional performance across various training disciplines, Raksha Mantri gave away awards to the graduating officers. Flying Officer Ashish Kumar Yadav was awarded the coveted 'President's Plaque' and the 'Nawanagar Sword of Honour' for standing first in the overall order of merit in the Pilot Course. Flying Officer Ekta Gupta was awarded the 'President's Plaque' for standing first in the overall order of merit in Navigation stream. Flying Officer Divyanshi Singh was awarded the 'President's Plaque' for standing first in the overall order of merit in the Ground Duty branches.

The event also included a display by the Akash Ganga and “Shakti” The Woman Air Warrior Drill Team which was well appreciated by the audience. A captivating aerobatics display by Su-30 MKI, Sarang helicopter display team and Suryakiran Aerobatic Team formed part of the grand finale of the parade. Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Training Command Air Marshal S Shrinivas, Commandant, AFA Air Marshal Rahul Bhasin and other senior IAF officials were present on the occasion.

The commissioning ceremony holds immense significance for the graduating officers as they are conferred the President's Commission in the presence of their proud parents and family members. This momentous occasion marks the beginning of a distinguished journey defined by honour, pride and an unwavering commitment to the service of the nation. An oath is administered to them, where they pledge to safeguard the sovereignty and honour of the country.



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