

Speech delivered by H.E. Mr. Muhammad Noor Rahman Sheikh, Ambassador of India to Lebanon on the occasion of 78th Indian Army Day at Kaskas – Beirut Cemetery

on 15 January 2026

Good morning! Sabah al khair! Namaskaar!

I warmly welcome all of you present here today - Guest Of Honour COP Ambassador Rola Noureddine, Ambassadors, Members of the Diplomat Corps, Senior Officials of the Lebanese Armed Forces, Officers and personnel of the Indian Army, Defense Attaches and my dear friends.

2. Today, as we celebrate the 78th Indian Army Day, we all have gathered here to honour the brave Indian soldiers who sacrificed their lives in the two world wars as part of the Commonwealth Army. More than 400 Indian soldiers who lost their lives during World War-I and World War-II are laid to rest in various cemeteries across Lebanon.

3. Let me quote Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi ji's message on this occasion: "On Army Day, we salute the courage and resolute commitment of the Indian Army. Our soldiers stand as a symbol of selfless service, safeguarding the nation with steadfast resolve, at times under the most challenging conditions. Their sense of duty inspires confidence and gratitude across the country. We remember with deep respect those who have laid down their lives in the line of duty."

4. The sacrifices that many in the army have made, and the lives that they have sacrificed to protect our nation are what this day is celebrated for. The Indian Army Day shines light on the bravery and relentless determination, that our Armed Forces portray each day while being a living testament to their unbreakable determination in protecting our country.

5. Indian Army, with strength of over 1.4 million active personnel, is the world's second-largest military force and shoulders the highest of the burdens and is tasked with protecting India from external and internal threats including what the whole world witnessed during Operation Sindoar following the heinous terrorist attack at Pahalgam in Kashmir last year, maintaining peace and security within the Indian borders, conducting rescue operations during natural calamities and disasters and various UN Peacekeeping Missions.

6. Indian Army is guided by the motto of "service before self" and the history beckons that whenever called for, they have neither backed down nor given up. Also being the largest contributor to the UN Peacekeeping Forces with nearly 300,000 Indians having served in 53 UN Peacekeeping Missions established around the world since 1948. Currently, there are more than 5300 Troops and Police from India who have been deployed to various UN Peacekeeping Missions.

7. Till date, 182 Indian peacekeepers have made the supreme sacrifice as the ultimate price in service to peace losing their lives serving under the UN flag.

8. The Indian Battalion has been deployed in the UNIFIL since November 1998 and has completed 27 years of peacekeeping operations in the Eastern Sector of Lebanon-Israel border (blue line). This is a testimony to India's longest running contribution to maintaining peace and security in this region.

9. Currently, INDBATT is represented by 4 Grenadiers Infantry Battalion since July 2025 with Col N Gladson as the CONTICO. The Indian Battalion contingent consists of around 600 personnel which is one of the largest contingents in the UNIFIL. Till last month, there used to be more than 850 personnel, which has been reduced due to the budgetary cuts by the UN for UNIFIL.

10. Indian Battalion has been discharging its peacekeeping role with utmost professionalism and dedication. At the same time, the Indian Battalion has also developed excellent rapport with the local community with its sincere outreach initiatives. The Battalion organizes regular medical and veterinary camps for the local communities.

11. Our Embassy in collaboration with Indian Battalion has been undertaking various quick impact projects in South Lebanon including setting up IT Training labs, water supply project, waste management and community halls renovations.

12. Thank you all once again for being here with us to celebrate this Day, as a mark of expressing our gratitude to the immeasurable sacrifices the Army makes and their contribution to everlasting peace and stability.

Jai Hind!
