

SPEECH GIVEN AT 128TH PRIZE GIVING ON 03 DEC 11 BY
PRESIDENT MAYO COLLEGE GENERAL COUNCIL
HIS HIGHNESS MAHARAJA GAJ SINGH JI OF JODHPUR

Our Chief Guest for the day, General Vijay Kumar Singh, Chief of the Army Staff, Members of the General Council, Principal, Staff, Students, Parents and Guests. We are indeed most delighted to welcome a distinguished soldier and Chief of our Army Staff in our midst today. More so, because of the long tradition and strong association that Mayo has with the Armed Forces. Several chiefs have visited us before and we are privileged to have Gen VK Singh present with us today.

As President of your General Council, it is my privilege to introduce the Chief on this memorable 128th Prize Giving. General Vijay Kumar Singh is a third generation officer of the Rajput Regiment and an Alumnus of Birla Public School, Pilani and National Defence Academy. The General was commissioned in 2 Rajput in 1970 and commanded the same battalion with distinction from June 1991 to May 1994. The General has seen action in the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971 and 'Operation PAWAN' in Sri Lanka in 1987 where he was awarded the Yudh Sewa Medal.

He has vast operational experience in counter insurgency operations. He is a graduate of the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington. He is also a graduate of the US Rangers 'Course at Fort Belhing USA and USA Army War College, Carlisle. While in command of the Counter Insurgency Force in Jammu & Kashmir, he was awarded the Ati Vishisht Sewa Medal. He commanded a prestigious Strike Corp in the Western Sector before taking over command of the Eastern Army in Mar 2008. He was awarded the Param Vishisht Sewa Medal by the President of India on the eve of the Republic Day 2009.

Gen VK Singh is a keen sportsman and plays almost all troop games. He also plays tennis, badminton and golf. His hobbies include trekking and photography. Married to Mrs Bharti Singh, they have two daughters. The elder is married to an Army Officer and the younger one is working after finishing her MBA.

General, we warmly welcome you here today. As I mentioned before, Mayo College has a long and distinguished relationship with the Armed Forces, starting with our founding fathers, the Princes of Rajasthan who commanded their own State Forces. One of the most distinguished Old Boys, Lt Gen Sir Ganga Singh Ji who donated this wonderful Pavilion where we are sitting and you are facing was a signatory at the Treaty of Versailles and represented the League of Nations for India. My grandfather, Lt Gen and Air Vice Marshal Maharaja Sir Umaid Singh had the distinction of holding ranks in both the Services. He only took up his rank in the Royal Air Force after he had completed his training. He was a keen aviator and his contribution to the Air Force is today a legend. Another distinguished Old Boy, Maharaja Bahadur Singh Ji of Bundi, one of the few who was allowed in active service was awarded an MC in the World War II for gallantry. More recently, Brigadier His Highness Maharaja Sawai Bhawani Singh Ji, a patron of our College and Vice President was awarded the MVC during the 1971 operation. We are happy that his grandson is here today at Mayo College. Captain Raja Narendra Singh Ji

of Sarila and Lt Col Shardul Vikram Singh, both served as ADC to Lord Mountbatten, the Viceroy of India. Post independence, Lt Gen Nathu Singh was the senior most Indian Officer at independence. He was followed by a series of Mayo Old Boys as Lt Generals. The late Lt Gen Umrao Singh Ji, Lt Gen Himmat Singh Ji of Ajayrajpura and recently we have had Lt Gen Ajai Singh Ji who was also Governor of Assam and was also an invitee on our Board. We also have Lt Gen KS Yadav (Retd) who very recently retired as Director General Assam Rifles.

Currently Mayo has the distinction of having three Star Officers serving in all the three Services. Lt Gen Sanjeev Anand, Lt Gen Surinder Rana, Vice Admiral Sunil Lamba and Air Marshal Gurdeep Singh Kochar. Other notable names amongst the Old Boys have been Major Jaswant Singh (Retd) who went on to become the Defence Minister of the country. We have Mr Ajai Vikram Singh who became the Defence Secretary of India. He is currently the President of Old Boys' Association. We have Lt Gen Aditya Singh (Retd) who is presently the Chairman of the Mayo College School Committee. In this Committee we also have Maj Manvendra Singh of the Territorial Army and former MP. And to cap it all, we went ahead and got ourselves a Major General as our Principal as well! Major General Lalotra who I think we can say has surely earned his spurs to call himself a Mayoite after yesterday's sterling performances by the boys on the SMS Polo ground, at the musical concert and on the stage. We are also very happy that this year we had a record academic performance in Class XII of a class average of 83%.

General, with this distinguish line up and several others who I have been unable to mention because of time constrain, we are very happy to have you in our midst. We welcome your presence in Mayo to inspire a new generation with patriotism and to serve the nation and we hope that you will motivate our young boys to join the Services and carry on with this glorious tradition and profession.

We thank you once again for being with us.

Thank you.

Jai Mayo!