

Rajnath Singh: In 'Aatmanirbhar push', India to start production of 108 military equipment

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LUCKNOW: In a fresh impetus to its flagship Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, India will soon start indigenous production of 108 military equipment, including complex defence systems.

Defence minister Rajnath Singh likely to make a formal announcement in this regard next week

Speaking to reporters in his parliamentary constituency Lucknow, Rajnath Singh said that this would raise the bar of India's defence capability. The defence minister also said that various defence projects, including the BrahMos unit in Lucknow, are being fast-tracked.

Singh said that the ministry was committed to lend its full support to the defence production and lessen dependency on imports. The development comes less than a year after the Centre approved the ban on import of the said number of equipment.

The ban on import of 49 of the 108 items came into effect by the end of 2021 while the remaining 59 will be banned by the end of December 2025. According to media reports, the list of equipment which will be produced indigenously include sensors, simulators, sonars, radars, assorted weapons, helicopters, next generation corvettes, Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) systems, tank engines, medium power radars for mountains, medium-range surface-to-air missile systems (MRSAM), and much more. During his address to defence ministry's post budget webinar on February 25, PM Narendra Modi said that the 70% of 2022-23 defence budget has been kept for domestic industry only.

The PM had categorically noted that the process of importing defence items was so long that by the time they reach the security forces, many of them become outdated and therefore the solution lies in going for indigenous manufacturing. Government push for maximising purchase of indigenous military equipment has resulted in armed forces spending 64% of their capital outlay in 2021-22 on indigenous options. The move had been in tune with the government policy to increase the 'indigenous to imports' ratio. The total budgetary provision for 2021-22 was around Rs 1.14 lakh crore, of which more than 64% was allocated for indigenous production.