

Defence Dialogue: Rajnath Singh Talks On Defence Corridor In UP & Def Infra Being Top Priority Of Yogi Govt

B'khand def corridor to make BrahMos, UAV, drones: Rajnath

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The upcoming Rs 20,000-crore Uttar Pradesh defence industrial corridor in Bundelkhand will produce highly advanced defence missiles and equipment like BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles and drones for the armed forces, Union defence minister Rajnath Singh revealed on Saturday.

Addressing 'Defence Dialogue' organised by The Economic Times and STRIVE, the defence minister said, "In the UP defence corridor, not only nuts and bolts or spare parts will be manufactured, (but) drones, UAVs, electronic warfare (systems), aircraft and BrahMos missiles will also be manufactured and assembled. He said an "enabling" environment has been prepared for defence manufacturing through defence corridors in UP and Tamil Nadu.

The defence minister said imported equipment has limits and sometimes "a situation may arise that in adverse circumstances you want to use it (equipment), and the other country using a system can block it". "Imported weapons come with some condi-



Defence minister Rajnath Singh at the 'Defence Dialogue' organised by The Economic Times and STRIVE

tions that are not appropriate for a sovereign nation. So, to safeguard the country's sovereignty, if we need equipment or platforms with the most advanced technology, then we have to develop it in our country only," he said.

The UP defence corridor is planned across six nodes—Lucknow, Kanpur, Jhansi, Agra, Aligarh and Chitrakoot. However, the lion's share of the corridor is centered around the Bundelkhand regions of Jhansi and Chitrakoot as land parks proposed for the project are 3,025 hectares in Jhansi and 500 hectares in Chitrakoot. Other smaller land parks proposed are in Kanpur (217 ha) and Aligarh (52 ha). Creation of land bank for setting up of

defence infrastructure is the first priority of the Yogi Adityanath-led UP government.

These land parks, where the defence units have been planned, are supported by a network of expressways for better and easy reach. So, Yamuna Expressway, Agra-Lucknow way, Purvanchal way, Bundelkhand way and Gorakhpur Link way and Ganga way will be the arteries of the defence corridor that will ensure smooth transport of labour and raw material.

"I have been told that for this corridor, land which is planned to be acquired is around 1,700 hectares. Of this, more than 95% of land has already been acquired," the defence minister said. He said

36 industries and institutions have been allotted nearly 600 hectares. He also informed that 109 MoUs have been signed, with an estimated investment value of more than Rs 16,000 crore. So far, investment of about Rs 2,500 crore has been made in the corridor by various entities, Singh said.

IIT Kanpur and IIT BHU, Varanasi have been approved by the state government for establishment of the Centre of Excellence related to the corridor. An MoU was signed between UPEIDA and the Indian Navy on August 13, 2020, to facilitate identifying problem areas, finding solutions and manufacturing through Indian Industry.

Ajay Kumar