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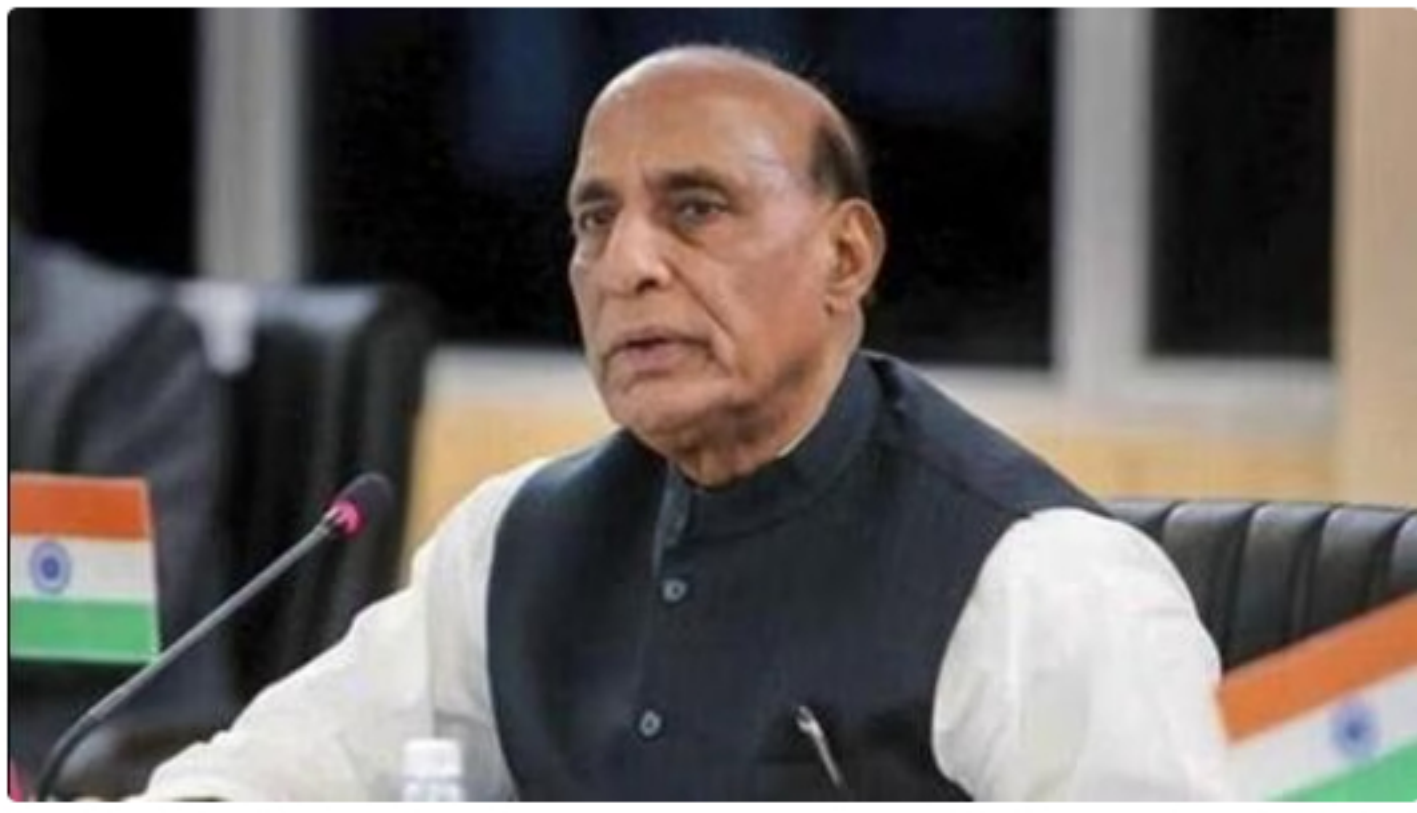
By [HT Correspondent](#)

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Under the ADITI scheme, start-ups will be eligible for financial aid of up to ₹25 crore for research, development, and innovation in military technology



Defence minister Rajnath Singh. (File)

Defence minister Rajnath Singh on Monday launched a new scheme to push innovation in critical and strategic defence technologies, under which start-ups will be eligible for financial aid of up to ₹25 crore for research, development, and innovation in military technology.

“The ADITI scheme will nurture innovation and help the country leap forward in the field of technology,” Singh said at DefConnect 2024, a defence conclave. ADITI stands for Acing Development of Innovative Technologies with iDEX (Innovations for Defence Excellence).

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The scheme, which will disburse aid worth ₹750 crore during 2023-26, aims to develop around “30 deep-tech critical and strategic technologies in the proposed timeframe,” the defence ministry said in a statement. It also seeks to create a ‘technology watch tool’ to bridge the gap between the expectations and requirements of the armed forces, and the capabilities of the defence innovation ecosystem, the statement said.

“As times are changing, new technologies are coming into existence. To become a developed country, it is necessary for us to achieve a technological edge. We must transform our country into a knowledge society,” Singh said.

He described “getting a hold on state-of-the-art defence technology” as the most crucial aspect for achieving self-reliance due to the increasing role of cutting-edge technology in modern warfare. “Technology can be mastered either by adopting the latest innovation from other countries or by developing our own. The government is working on both methods.”

Talking about the government’s vision of attaining self-reliance in the defence manufacturing sector, Singh said the country cannot remain dependent on imported weapons and platforms as it can be fatal for strategic autonomy. Without self-reliance, India cannot take independent decisions on global issues in line with its national interests, he said.

“Strategic autonomy can be maintained only when arms and equipment are made in India by our own people. We are working towards this, and the results are positive. While in 2014 our domestic defence production was around ₹44,000 crore, today it has crossed the record figure of ₹one lakh crore and is growing continuously.”

India has sharpened its focus on the defence manufacturing sector during the last five to six years and taken several measures to achieve self-reliance. These include banning the import of a range of weapons, systems and parts, creating a separate budget for buying locally made military hardware, increasing foreign direct investment from 49% to 74% and improving ease of doing business.