

'Ashok Leyland unit proof of UP's improved law, order'

Defence exports have increased from Rs 1000 crore in 2014 to over Rs 25,000 crore now and will reach Rs 50,000 crore by 2029-30, says Rajnath Singh

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LUCKNOW: Defence minister Rajnath Singh on Friday said Uttar Pradesh has emerged as a major hub of defence manufacturing, with investments of over Rs 34,000 crore already made across six nodes of the state's defence corridor, marking a decisive shift towards India's self-reliance in weapons and ammunition production.

He was addressing a gathering after inaugurating Ashok Leyland's electric vehicle (EV) manufacturing plant in Lucknow's Sarojini Nagar.

India is no longer dependent on other countries for weapons, missiles or defence equipment, Singh said, adding that these are now being manufactured domestically, with a significant portion originating from Uttar Pradesh.

The inauguration of Ashok Leyland's electric vehicle plant in the state capital is proof of the improved law and order scenario and infrastructure development in the state, said Singh, who represents Lucknow in the Lok Sabha.

"Once there was gopa da in the state. But today, industries are coming here daily," Singh said.

Rajnath Singh said the defence corridor, spread across Lucknow, Kannur, Jhansi, Agra, Aligarh and Chitrakoot, is producing arms, ammunition and components for fighter aircraft, with major firms setting up manufacturing units in the state.

"I have been told that investments worth around Rs 34,000 crore have been made in these defence corridor nodes," he said.

Referring to the Uttar Pradesh Aerospace and Defence Unit and Employment Promotion Policy, Singh said it aims to attract massive investment over the next five years and create employment opportunities for lakhs of youth, ensuring that people find jobs locally without being forced to migrate outside the state.

Singh said a BrahMos Aerospace factory has already been set up in Lucknow, manufacturing BrahMos missiles.

"Everyone knows what BrahMos did in Operation Sindoos," Singh said.

Before 2014, domestic defence production in the country was only Rs 46000 crore, he said, adding that this figure is Rs 15 lakh crore.

Singh also said the defence export before 2014 was only Rs 1000 crore and today it is more than Rs 25,000 crore.

By 2029-30, defence exports from India will be Rs 50,000 crore, he added.

He said the Ashok Leyland plant was completed in 18 months, well ahead of the planned 60-month schedule.



Defence minister Rajnath Singh with chief minister Yogi Adityanath and others during the inauguration of Ashok Leyland's EV manufacturing plant, in Lucknow on Friday.

'Not just a skilled politician but also able economist,' Rajnath lauds Yogi

LUCKNOW: Defence minister Rajnath Singh on Friday praised chief minister Yogi Adityanath, calling him not just a capable politician but also an able economist.

Addressing the inauguration function of Ashok Leyland's electric vehicle (EV) manufacturing plant here in the presence of Union minister H D Kumaraswamy and Adityanath, Singh said, "Earlier believed that you (Adityanath) are adept only in politics, but now I have reached the conclusion that you are equally proficient in economics."

The unit would not only position Uttar Pradesh but also the nation at the forefront of clean and green mobility and future-ready technologies. The project will generate employment opportunities for the state's youth and equip them with skills in emerging EV technologies, enabling them to build their futures within their own state."

Expressing confidence in India's development roadmap, the defence minister said, "The goal of making India a developed nation by 2047, envisioned under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, will be achieved through the progress of Uttar Pradesh. The path to Vikas Bharat goes through Vikas Uttar Pradesh," he said.

He added, "The facility would serve as a major hub for skill development, preparing large numbers of young people for gainful employment and higher incomes in the years ahead."

"You know very well how profits are generated," he added. Explaining the context of his remarks, Singh said the Uttar Pradesh government allotted around 70 acres of land for the Ashok Leyland project at nearly 75 per cent subsidised rates under its industrial policy. While such a decision might appear concessional in the short term, Singh said it reflected Adityanath's economic foresight as it would generate far greater long-term returns for the state through investment, employment and sustained industrial growth.

Singh also expressed his gratitude to the Ashok Leyland management and the Hindujas for setting up their first EV facility in the state, and congratulated the people of Uttar Pradesh on the new industrial investment.

Referring to the state capital's inclusive culture, Singh, who is also the Lucknow MP, told the Hindujas that the city embraces those who contribute to its growth. "You may not be from Lucknow, but you belong to Lucknow. The people of Lucknow will accept you and give you a place in their hearts - I assure you of that," Singh said.

Congratulating chief minister Yogi Adityanath, he said Uttar Pradesh has become synonymous with economic development, attracting not only domestic, but also global investors, including several Fortune 500 companies.

Emphasising that electric vehicles represent the future of transportation, Rajnath Singh said, "The reliance on petroleum-based vehicles would gradually decline. In this context, the Ashok Leyland EV unit will play a transformative role, contributing significantly to clean energy adoption and advanced manufacturing for both the state and the country."

He added, "The facility would serve as a major hub for skill development, preparing large numbers of young people for gainful employment and higher incomes in the years ahead."

Referring to the extensive road infrastructure built over the past 11 years under the double-engine government, he said it has laid a strong foundation for rapid industrialisation.

The project, he noted, is a clear outcome of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visionary "Make in India" and "Atmanirbhar Bharat" initiatives. With the current pace of economic growth, he expressed confidence that India will soon join the ranks of developed nations.

Union heavy industries minister H D Kumaraswamy said electric mobility lies at the core of India's commitment to achieving net-zero emissions by 2070 and is a key pillar of the country's transition towards clean, sustainable and self-reliant transportation.