

Centre Targets Rs 50,000 Crore Defence Exports By 2028-29: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh



Promoting 'Aatmanirbharta' in defence manufacturing is the biggest change brought by the government, which is giving a new shape to India's defence sector, said Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

New Delhi: "India's defence apparatus is today stronger than ever as the government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is focusing on bolstering it with the sentiment of Indianness," said Defence Minister Rajnath Singh at a Defence Summit organised by a private media organisation in New Delhi. He termed 'perspective' as the major difference between the current and the previous dispensations, stating that the present government ardently believes in the capabilities of the people of India while those in power earlier were somewhat sceptical about their potential.

Singh further stated that promoting 'Aatmanirbharta' in defence manufacturing is the biggest change brought by the government, which is giving a new shape to India's defence sector. He enumerated the reformative steps taken by the Ministry of Defence to achieve self-reliance, including setting up of Defence Industrial Corridors in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu; notification of positive indigenisation lists; reserving 75% of capital procurement budget for domestic industry; corporatisation of Ordnance Factory Board; and schemes/initiatives such as Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX), iDEX Prime and Acing Development of Innovative Technologies with iDEX (ADITI) & Technology Development Fund (TDF).

Highlighting the positive impact on the defence sector due to these decisions, Rajnath Singh said, "The annual defence production, which was around Rs 40,000 crore in 2014, has now crossed a record Rs 1.10 lakh crore. The defence exports now touched Rs 16,000 crore from a meagre Rs 1,000 crore nine to ten years ago. We have set a target to achieve Rs 50,000 crore of exports by 2028-29," he said.

The Defence Minister emphasised that the country's defense system has been induced with new energy by the government, as per the vision of the people of the country. This, he said has resulted in India emerging as a powerful nation on the global stage with a strong and self-reliant military. "Today, our forces possess strong willpower due to a powerful leadership at the Centre. We are working continuously towards keeping the morale of the soldiers high. They are equipped, capable and ready to give a befitting reply to anyone, who casts an evil eye on India," he said.

Singh added that the government has provided an ideal environment to the private sector while trusting the youth and promoting their innovation. "If our young ignited minds take one step forward, we will help them by taking 100 steps. If they take 100 steps, we will take 1,000 steps forward," he said. Singh asserted that when it comes to technology, developing countries have two options--'innovation' and 'imitation'--and the government is laying special emphasis on making the country a technology creator rather than a follower.

"Imitating technology from developed countries is not wrong for those whose innovation capacity and human resources have not reached the level required to produce new technologies. If a country imitates technology from other nations, it still moves ahead from old technology; however, the problem is that one becomes addicted to imitation and gets used to second-class technology. This forces them to fall 20-30 years behind a developed country. Losing national self-confidence is a bigger problem as one always remains a technology follower. This mentality comes into your culture, ideology, literature, lifestyle and philosophy. Prime Minister Narendra Modi calls this follower mentality as the mindset of slavery," he said. Rajnath Singh listed out the steps taken by the government to shed the colonial mindset, including the introduction of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, in place of the Indian Penal Code.

"We strengthened the faith of the youth in the culture of the country. We rekindled Indianness in India. Our belief not only changed the way one sees history, but also rekindled the dreams of the youth studying in IITs, IIMs as well as other prestigious universities in India. Instead of seeking greener pastures abroad, the youth today is contributing to the Indian economy through startups and innovation within the country," he said.

Highlighting the harmony between military power and spirituality prevalent in the Indian culture for centuries, he emphasised that the government has been consistently working for the betterment of the serving and retired personnel as well as those who made the supreme sacrifice in the service of the nation, along with their families.

"The Armed Forces are being modernised with the latest state-of-the-art weapons/platforms. We established the National War Memorial in New Delhi to honour the sacrifices of the bravehearts. In addition, we implemented the 'One Rank One Pension' scheme, a long-pending demand of the ex-servicemen," he pointed out.