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“Indian ethos do not see global order as a contest for dominance, but as a shared journey towards harmony, dignity, and mutual respect for all. In our tradition, the measure of strength is not in the ability to command, but in the capacity to care; not in the pursuit of narrow interest, but in the commitment to the global good,” said Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh during his address at the World Leaders Forum in New Delhi on August 22, 2025. He underlined India’s growing leadership in shaping a just global order and highlighted the unprecedented strides made in strengthening the nation’s defence sector.

Referring to a recent statement made by Pakistan’s Army Chief regarding comparing India’s economy to a sports car and Pakistan’s to a dump truck, the Raksha Mantri said that this was not merely troll material but a revealing admission. “If two countries got independence together, and one built an economy like a sports car with hard work, right policies and vision, while the other remains stuck in failure, it is their own doing. This is not a joke, it is a confession,” he stated.

“We must ensure that along with India’s prosperity, our fighting spirit for our defence capability and national honour remains equally strong. Operation Sindoor has already shown our resolve. We will not allow any illusion about India’s strength to take root in Pakistan’s mind,” underlined Raksha Mantri.

Shri Rajnath Singh pointed out that defence exports have grown nearly 35 times in the last decade from just Rs 686 crore in 2013-14 to Rs 23,622 crore in 2024-25 with defence products now being exported to nearly 100 countries. He also highlighted that the government has set an ambitious target of achieving Rs 30,000 crore in defence exports this year and RS 50,000 crore by 2029. Simultaneously, he stated that domestic defence production has more than tripled from Rs 40,000 crore in 2014 to over Rs 1.5 lakh crore in 2024-25, and is on track to touch nearly Rs 2 lakh crore in the current fiscal.

Raksha Mantri underlined that India has released five positive indigenisation lists covering 509 platforms, systems and weapons, which will now be mandatorily manufactured within the country and similarly, Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) have issued their own indigenisation lists covering over 5,000 strategically important sub-systems, spares and components. He added that the government has reserved 75% of the defence capital procurement budget for Indian companies.

“Our vision of Aatmanirbharta in defence is not just about reducing imports. It is about creating an ecosystem where Indian industry, public and private, develops world-class capability, where we not only meet domestic requirements but also emerge as a global supplier of high-quality defence products,” stated Shri Rajnath Singh.

The Raksha Mantri highlighted recent breakthroughs in indigenous capability. He noted that Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has received orders worth Rs 66,000 crore for 97 Tejas fighter aircraft, in addition to an earlier order of 83 aircraft worth Rs 48,000 crore. “Our Tejas aircraft is going to be a great example of India's indigenous defence capabilities. We have also taken steps towards making fifth generation fighter aircraft and aircraft engines in India,” he added.

Shri Rajnath Singh emphasised India’s efforts to create defence industrial corridors in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, which are attracting major investments and acting as growth drivers for the defence sector. He also highlighted that the government has promoted private sector participation through the Strategic Partnership model, enabling Indian firms to build advanced platforms including fighter jets, helicopters, tanks and submarines. He highlighted the role of iDEX (Innovations for Defence Excellence) in nurturing startups and MSMEs, and pointed to policy reforms such as raising FDI limits in defence to 74% (automatic route) and up to 100% (government route), and offering Transfer of Technology from DRDO free of cost.

Raksha Mantri underscored that the defence budget has been substantially enhanced under Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi’s leadership, rising from Rs 2.53 lakh crore in 2013-14 to nearly Rs 6.22 lakh crore in 2024-25, with further increases planned after the successful conduct of Operation Sindoor. “Strengthening India’s defence sector has been one of the government’s top priorities. When defence is strong, the nation’s development remains uninterrupted,” he added.

Shri Rajnath Singh also extended an invitation to global defence companies to partner with India, citing Airbus’s ongoing production of C295 transport aircraft in collaboration with Tata Aerospace. “Today there is an opportunity for all the big defence companies of the world to invest in India and co-produce defence equipment here. Our Make in India is not limited to India only. When you Make in India, you will make for the world,” he stressed.

Raksha Mantri stated that he firmly believes that India is destined to play a leading role in shaping the next global order, citing three main reasons: India’s civilisational values, its rapidly growing economic strength, and its unmatched demographic dividend. He explained that India’s ethos of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world is one family) provides the moral foundation for a just and inclusive order.

Shri Rajnath Singh underlined India’s economic rise as the fastest growing economy in the world, now the fourth largest and moving towards the third, with exports up 76% in the past decade and domestic demand resilient despite global challenges. He further highlighted India’s young population as a transformative asset, noting that with 65% of citizens below the age of 35 and the country home to the world’s third-largest startup ecosystem with over 100 unicorns.

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