

Raksha Mantri to grace Defence Estates Day celebrations as the Department enters its 100th year

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Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh will preside over the Defence Estates Day Celebrations at Raksha Sampada Bhawan, Delhi Cantonment on December 16, 2025. He will confer the Raksha Mantri Awards for Excellence in public service in the field of Defence Land Management and Municipal Administration of 61 Cantonment Boards spread across the country.

This year's celebrations hold special significance as the Department steps into its 100th year, commemorating a legacy that traces its origins to 1765, when the first Cantonment was established in Barrackpore, West Bengal. Over the subsequent century and a half, cantonments such as Danapur (1766), Meerut (1803), Ambala (1843), Delhi (1915) etc followed, laying the foundation of Defence and Land Administration in India. The Department was later formalised on December 16, 1926 as the Department of Land and Cantonments under the Ministry of Defence.

The Defence Estates Department today manages the largest landholding of the Government of India under the Ministry of Defence. While steeped in history, the Department has undertaken an exceptional modernisation journey, transforming itself into a pioneer in digital and tech-enabled land management. The Department has successfully implemented E-Chhawani project by providing 100% municipal services online to 20 lakh Cantonment residents. The Department's efforts towards water conservation and rejuvenation of water bodies has been acknowledged at the highest level as it received the National Water Awards for Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari.

The Department has undertaken complete digitisation of legacy land records, ensuring their preservation for the future. Entire File Management system has been modernised with Nationwide adoption of a secure, technology-backed file management system enabling seamless retrieval and safe archival. A centralised software platform 'Raksha Bhoomi', hosted on secure servers, now serves as the unified repository of all defence land records.

The Department has developed core competency in Land Survey with extensive adoption of Continuously Operating Reference Stations-enabled Differential Global Positioning System, Geographic Information System-based tools, and high-resolution satellite imagery to strengthen accuracy. A Centre of Excellence on Satellite and Unmanned Remote Vehicle Initiative, leveraging Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning and emerging technologies to build next-generation solutions for defence land management.

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