



Raksha Mantri & his French counterpart to co-chair 6th Annual Defence Dialogue in Bengaluru

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Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh will co-chair the 6th India-France Annual Defence Dialogue with Minister of the Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs of France Ms Catherine Vautrin in Bengaluru, Karnataka on February 17, 2026. The meeting will review the entire gamut of bilateral defence cooperation, with focus on expanding industrial collaboration.

During the meeting, a defence cooperation agreement is expected to be renewed for another 10 years, with an MoU on Joint Venture for manufacturing of Hammer missiles likely to be signed in the presence of both Defence Ministers. An announcement is also expected with respect to reciprocal deployment of officers at the Indian Army and French Land Forces establishments.

The two Ministers are also expected to witness the virtual inauguration of the H125 Light Utility Helicopter Final Assembly of Tata Airbus by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and French President Mr Emmanuel Macron at Vemagal, Karnataka.

Defence has traditionally formed an important pillar of the relationship between the two countries. The strong and enduring bilateral ties were vividly reflected in 2024-2025 through a series of high-profile exchanges. PM Modi was the Guest of Honour at the Bastille Day Parade in July 2023, before the French President graced the Republic Day Parade 2024 as the Chief Guest.

The recent India-EU Security & Defence Partnership marks a significant step in deepening collective engagement with European nations. Military-to-Military cooperation is on an increase. India and France have been regularly carrying out three major exercises - Exercise Shakti with Army, Exercise Varuna with Navy, and Exercise Garuda with Air Force, and several other opportunity engagements.

This would be the maiden visit of Ms Catherine Vautrin to India after she took over as the French Defence Minister on October 12, 2025. The India-France Annual Defence Dialogue is a structured ministerial-level bilateral meeting to review and guide defence & security cooperation. The 5th edition of the meeting was held in France from October 11-13, 2023.

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