



Military modernisation driven by a self-reliant & future-ready defence sector is Govt's top priority: Raksha Mantri on the eve of 80th Independence Day

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"The Government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, is according the highest priority to the modernisation of the defence forces driven by a self-reliant and future-ready defence sector," said Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh in his address to the soldiers through Akashvani on the eve of 80th Independence Day on August 14, 2026. Highlighting the transformative shift witnessed by the defence sector in the last 12 years due to the initiatives such as 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' and 'Make-in-India', Raksha Mantri asserted that India has become a nation which is effectively catering to its own security needs, while emerging as a global defence manufacturing hub and a net defence exporter.

Shri Rajnath Singh emphasised that the domestic defence production, which stood at just Rs 46,000 crore in 2014, has skyrocketed to a record Rs 1.78 lakh crore in the Financial Year (FY) 2025-26, nearly a four-fold increase over the last decade. This achievement, he said, is a testament to the structural changes that have taken place in the defence sector. He pointed out that Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) and other public sector entities accounted for approximately 76% of the total defence production, with the private sector contributing 24%, up from 22% in the previous fiscal year. This growing participation of the private sector signals a continuously improving business environment within the defence sector, he said.

Raksha Mantri added that defence exports, which stood at a mere Rs 686 crore in FY 2013-14, surged to an all-time high of Rs 38,424 crore in FY 2025-26, an increase of over 5,500%. He described the feat as the most compelling evidence of Aatmanirbharta in the defence sector. "Today, India has 145 defence exporters, and our products are being exported to over 80 countries. I am confident that we will achieve our defence exports target of Rs 50,000 crore by 2029," he said.

Shri Rajnath Singh also pointed out that the defence budget has risen from Rs 2.53 lakh crore in FY 2013-14 to Rs 7.85 lakh crore in FY 2026-27, which is a reflection of India's growing commitment to future defence technologies. "Capital expenditure has grown from Rs 94,588 crore to Rs 2.19 lakh crore. Our focus on Research & Development has also intensified. The R&D budget, which stood at Rs 15,283 crore in FY 2014-15, has increased by 90% to Rs 29,100 crore in FY 2026-27," he said.

Raksha Mantri added that over the past year, the Defence Acquisition Council has granted Acceptance of Necessity for projects worth over Rs 8.75 lakh crore, which highlights the Government's emphasis on defence modernisation. He listed the fundamental reforms undertaken in defence procurement to accelerate this modernisation process, including a two-

fold increase in financial ceiling for Field Commanders to strengthen operational efficiency, and facilitation of procurement worth more than Rs 1.25 lakh crore through the revenue route to boost indigenisation.

Shri Rajnath Singh acknowledged the enthusiastic participation of the defence forces in the journey towards Aatmanirbharta. He stressed that India's defence self-reliance drive is gaining momentum as indigenous warships, aircraft and advanced military systems are strengthening the capabilities of the Defence Forces.

Raksha Mantri asserted that DRDO and the defence forces are positioning India at the forefront of technologies for future warfare amidst the evolving defence landscape. He made special mention of the successful test of the first Tactical Advanced Range Augmentation system, which has the capability to transform conventional weapons into precision-guided munitions. "The testing of the Advanced Agni Missile, equipped with MIRV technology, has added a new dimension to the strategic deterrence capabilities. Successful trials of the Long-Range Land Attack Cruise Missile, RudraM-II Air-to-Surface Missile, Naval Anti-Ship Missile-SR, and Pinaka Long-Range Guided Rocket have provided unprecedented strength to the nation's strike capabilities," he added.

On the successful test of Active Cooled Full-Scale Scramjet Combustor for over 1,200 seconds, Shri Rajnath Singh stated that the feat has placed India among the select group of nations capable of developing hypersonic missile technology. He added that the nation's air defence capabilities have been further bolstered by the first successful test of the indigenous Kusha' Long-Range Surface-to-Air Missile.

Raksha Mantri underlined that border area development is a focus area of the Government as the objective is to enhance defence preparedness and connectivity with border areas. He lauded the defence forces for being the 'first responders' to carry out relief and rescue operations whenever an unfortunate natural disaster occurs in the country or abroad.

Shri Rajnath Singh reiterated the Government's commitment towards the welfare of serving and retired defence forces personnel as well as their families, describing them as a reflection of honor, dignity, and self-respect. "Over the past five years, there has been a 300% increase in the budget of the Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme. Furthermore, under the Armed Forces Flag Day Fund, the Penury Grant has been doubled from Rs 4,000 to Rs 8,000, the Education Grant from Rs 1,000 to Rs 2,000 and the Marriage Grant from Rs 50,000 to Rs 1,00,000. These decisions demonstrate our commitment to the welfare of our soldiers and their Next-of-Kin," he said.

Raksha Mantri also underscored the Government's continued focus on providing increased opportunities for women in the defence forces and effectively utilising Nari Shakti in national security & nation building. "We achieved a historic milestone when the first batch of female cadets trained at the National Defence Academy was commissioned as officers in the three Services. This is proof that courage and leadership are not confined to any gender. 'Samudra Pradakshina', the first tri-service all-women circumnavigation sailing expedition onboard Indian Army Sailing Vessel Triveni, stands as a symbol of 'New India' powered by 'Nari Shakti', he said.

Shri Rajnath Singh emphasised that 79 years ago, India's freedom fighters such as Mahatma Gandhi, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Bhagat Singh, Chandrashekhar Azad, Sarojini Naidu, Rani Gaidinliu, and countless known and unknown heroes laid the foundation of independent India, and the responsibility of safeguarding the nation's sovereignty, unity, and integrity today rests on the Defence Forces. "Even in adverse circumstances, the steadfast resolve of our soldiers ensures that the citizens realise their dreams in a safe environment. Their courage,

commitment and discipline serve as a source of inspiration to every Indian. The nation will remain forever indebted to their unparalleled service, sacrifice, and dedication,” he said, expressing gratitude to every soldier.

Raksha Mantri stressed that the Independence Day this year holds special significance as 2026 marks the 150th anniversary of the National Song ‘Vande Mataram’. “It is our collective responsibility to celebrate the occasion with great enthusiasm. It is not merely an anniversary, but a celebration of our collective consciousness. I am confident that this Independence Day will continue to fuel the spirit of patriotism and service to the nation within every citizen. Let us pledge to become active participants in nation-building and, by discharging our duties with dedication, make meaningful contributions towards building Viksit Bharat,” he said while concluding his address.

स्वतंत्रता दिवस की पूर्व संध्या पर सैनिकों के नाम संदेश। <https://t.co/rOkBuuCcil>

— Rajnath Singh (@rajnathsingh) August 14, 2026

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