

India stands as the First Responder, Preferred Security Partner in the Indian Ocean Region: Shri Rajnath Singh

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Mediterranean, Atlantic Ocean, demonstrates India's blue-
water force capability**

**If the seas are secure, India will be secure; if India is secure,
the resolve for a Viksit Bharat will be further strengthened:
Raksha Mantri**

Shri Rajnath Singh addresses the 2nd Indian Navy's Commanders' Conference

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“India stands firm as the First Responder, Preferred Security Partner and as a symbol of trust and reliability in the Indian Ocean Region and the entire world is witnessing the growth of both our strategic position and our strategic responsibility in the region. Today, issues such as congestion, deception, and gray-zone activities have made our maritime domain far more complex than ever before. Hence, we must elevate our monitoring and response mechanisms to a new level,” said Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh while addressing the second edition of the Indian Navy's biannual Commanders' Conference 2026 at Nausena Bhawan, New Delhi, on September 29, 2026.



Raksha Mantri asserted that the presence of Indian warships extends to the South China Sea, the Mediterranean, and the Atlantic Ocean, demonstrating our blue-water force capability. The role of the Indian Navy is crucial in ensuring the strategic depth and regional power projection, he added.

Highlighting the government's commitment to the modernization of the Navy under the leadership of the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, Shri Rajnath stated, "The Indian Navy serves as a strategic anchor in the vision of 'Viksit Bharat 2047'. Beyond merely guarding maritime boundaries, our Navy strengthens economic protection, regional stability, and power projection." He urged the Indian Navy to maintain its unrelenting momentum while transforming itself into a future-ready, combat-ready, and globally respected force.

Lauding the India Navy's role in the crisis in West Asia, Shri Rajnath Singh highlighted that ensuring the safe transit of Indian-flagged merchant vessels—particularly LPG tankers—through the Strait of Hormuz under 'Operation Urja Suraksha' is an outstanding achievement. India imports approximately 85–90 per cent of its crude oil and around 50 per cent of its natural gas through maritime routes; therefore, the security of sea lanes is directly connected with the country's economy, energy supplies and defence preparedness, he added.

Underlining the Navy's efforts towards achieving self-reliance in the defence sector, Raksha Mantri emphasised, "The Indian Navy's warship production ecosystem is now meeting global benchmarks. The warships commissioned recently contain over 75% indigenous content. In the times ahead, we must not only meet our own requirements but also export our warships to friendly foreign nations.

Shri Rajnath Singh called for a significant upgrade of India's maritime surveillance architecture, recognising the importance of existing systems. He added that the growing volume and complexity of maritime traffic require enhanced analytical capabilities.

Shri Rajnath Singh described 2026 as a historic year for the Indian Navy, with plans for the induction or commissioning of 18 warships, which would constitute the largest single-year force accretion in the Navy's history. "The developments reflected the growing maturity of India's domestic naval shipbuilding ecosystem, while emphasising that further capability enhancement remained necessary," he said.

Commending the Navy's efforts towards women's empowerment, recruitment and innovation under the "All Ranks, All Roles" approach, Raksha Mantri highlighted the deployment of women officers on frontline warships and aircraft. He also praised the participation of women in naval navigational expeditions, including the Navika Sagar Parikrama voyage.

Shri Rajnath Singh congratulated the Indian Navy on assuming command of Combined Task Force-154 under the Combined Maritime Forces, describing it as an important contribution to regional cooperative security. He also highlighted Operation Southern Readiness, conducted in Kochi during India's command tenure of CTF-154, which involved 276 personnel from 27 countries, 76 facilitators and subject-matter experts, and four international organisations.

Raksha Mantri further commended the deployment of INS Sudarshini for Lokayan-26, which strengthened India's maritime diplomacy and engagement with the Indian diaspora across the United States, Atlantic and Mediterranean regions while showcasing India's maritime heritage.

Concluding his address, Shri Rajnath Singh commended the Indian Navy for maintaining a high level of combat readiness and fulfilling its commitments across the region despite evolving challenges. He said India's maritime power is aimed not merely at displaying the national flag at sea, but at ensuring that wherever the Tricolour is seen, it conveys security, trust and confidence. He reaffirmed the Government's support to the Indian Navy and said: "If the seas are secure, India will be secure; and if India is secure, the resolve for a Viksit Bharat will be further strengthened."

Shri Rajnath Singh also interacted with the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and the Chief of the Army Staff during the Conference. The three-day apex-level conference, being held from September 29, 2026 to October 01, 2026, brings together the top leadership of the Indian Navy to review operational preparedness, maritime security and future capability development.

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