



# Raksha Mantri Presents SIDM Champion Awards 2026 and Calls for Greater Private Sector Participation, R&D Investment and Enhanced Defence Production Capacity

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Posted On: 09 OCT 2026 7:23PM by PIB Delhi

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh presented the SIDM Champion Awards 2026 at the 8th Annual Session of the Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers (SIDM) in New Delhi on October 09, 2026. A total of 15 Champion Awards were presented at the event, recognising organisations for their achievements in indigenous technology development, product innovation, design, import substitution, manufacturing excellence and exports. RM congratulated the awardees for their contributions to indigenous defence manufacturing, technological innovation, design capabilities, import substitution, manufacturing excellence and exports.

Underlining the importance of the session's theme, “Sovereign Capabilities, Contested Frontiers: Accelerating India's Strategic Autonomy in an Era of Disruption,” the RM said that national security increasingly depends on the country's ability to design, develop, manufacture and control the technologies and equipment required by its Defence Forces. He expressed confidence that India's talent pool, young workforce, industrial capabilities and policy support would enable the country to emerge among the world's leading defence manufacturing nations.

The Raksha Mantri acknowledged SIDM's role in strengthening the domestic defence industrial ecosystem and facilitating policy-industry dialogue. He called upon the Indian defence industry to increase private sector participation in defence production, strengthen research and development (R&D), enhance surge and production capacity, and accelerate technological innovation to advance India's strategic autonomy and self-reliance in defence.

Shri Rajnath Singh said that the transformation of India's defence industry from a major importer of defence equipment to a credible and reliable exporter of sophisticated military hardware is a significant achievement. He noted that India's defence exports reached a record ₹38,424 crore in the financial year 2025-26, registering growth of over 60 per cent compared with the previous financial year. He reiterated the target of achieving ₹50,000 crore in defence exports by 2029.

Emphasising the importance of private sector participation, Shri Rajnath Singh recalled his earlier call for increasing the private sector's share in India's total defence production from approximately 24 percent to 50 percent. He said that the private sector's contribution had grown significantly over the past 12 years and urged industry leaders to set progressive milestones to achieve this shared national objective. He assured the industry that the Government would continue to support its growth while maintaining the necessary standards of regulation, safety, quality and accountability.

Highlighting the changing nature of warfare, the Raksha Mantri observed that modern conflicts increasingly depend on technological capabilities, including drones, missiles, air defence systems and rapidly evolving software and communications technologies. "Defence manufacturers must treat expenditure on R&D as an investment that strengthens operational preparedness, improves competitiveness and contributes to national security" said RM.

Referring to Operation Sindoor, RM highlighted the importance of ensuring that domestic manufacturing facilities can rapidly scale up production when required. He urged the industry to develop innovative solutions to expand manufacturing capacity and respond swiftly to changing operational demands.

Established in 2017, SIDM has emerged as a unified platform representing large enterprises, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), startups, academia and foreign original equipment manufacturers. He said that policy reforms introduced by the Government, including the Defence Acquisition Procedure, Defence Procurement Manual, Positive Indigenisation Lists, SRIJAN portal and Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX), were aimed at expanding the capabilities of India's private defence industry.

The event was attended by Defence Secretary Shri Rajesh Kumar Singh, Director General (Acquisition) Shri A. Anbarasu, SIDM Founder President Shri Baba Kalyani, SIDM President Shri Arun Ramchandani, senior government officials, representatives of the Defence Forces, and leaders of Indian and international defence companies.

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**SR/Ruchi**

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