

Close defence-academia-industry collaboration key to accelerating development & adoption of indigenous tech amid evolving nature of warfare: Raksha Mantri

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Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh has called for close collaboration among the Defence Forces, DRDO, academic institutions, defence public sector undertakings and private industry, including start-ups, to accelerate the development, adoption & continuous upgradation of indigenous technologies amidst the rapidly evolving nature of warfare. Speaking at the launch of IIT Kanpur's 'Greater Than Us' fundraising campaign in New Delhi on October 14, 2026, he emphasised that strengthening indigenous technological capabilities is strategically crucial as artificial intelligence, autonomous systems, unmanned platforms, advanced sensors, cybersecurity and space-based technologies are reshaping military dynamics.



Raksha Mantri underscored the growing interlinkage between national security and technological capability, stressing that IITs can make a significant contribution by aligning academic research with operational defence requirements and industry needs. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi-led Government's 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' commitment lies at

the centre of its 'Viksit Bharat' vision as it aims to create a technologically capable, economically competitive, innovative and confident nation, which is not just a consumer of knowledge & technology but an active contributor to their creation, he said.

Shri Rajnath Singh highlighted the importance of strong institutions of higher education and research in realising this vision, noting that the Government has made sustained efforts to strengthen the ecosystem, whose growing contribution to innovation and entrepreneurship is reflected in the IIT ecosystem's support for over 6,000 start-ups, 56 unicorns and nearly 5,000 patents. "These achievements demonstrate that IITs are not merely institutions that impart knowledge, but are increasingly becoming engines of innovation, enterprise and technological capability. Institutions such as IIT Kanpur play a significant role in advancing India's development by expanding scientific capabilities, strengthening the innovation ecosystem and creating solutions that benefit society," he added.



Acknowledging the initiatives undertaken in this direction, Raksha Mantri made special mention of IIT Kanpur's DRDO-Industry-Academia Centre of Excellence and welcomed the proposal to establish a School of Defence Technologies at the Institute. He added that the proposal to set up a National Military Drone Technology Hub at IIT Kanpur, in collaboration with the Ministry of Defence to fast-track indigenisation and innovation to gain combat edge, has made significant progress and its approval process is nearing completion.

Shri Rajnath Singh exuded confidence that such partnerships would bring scientific talent, institutional expertise and the operational experience of the Defence Forces under one umbrella to develop indigenous technologies of strategic importance. Credible academic institutions can play a crucial role in translating research into practical defence applications and addressing the evolving technological requirements of the military, he said.

On IIT Kanpur's role in strengthening Uttar Pradesh's industrial ecosystem, Raksha Mantri said that the institute can serve as a bridge between scientific research and industrial application, emerging technologies and enterprise. He noted that Kanpur's rich industrial legacy, coupled with IIT Kanpur's technological expertise can generate new opportunities for entrepreneurship, employment, investment and economic growth, contributing to the state's vision of becoming a one-trillion-dollar economy.

Shri Rajnath Singh referred to the C3i Cybersecurity Technology Innovation Hub at IIT Kanpur and the institute's medical school, terming them as significant initiatives in cybersecurity, healthcare and medical technology innovation. He stated that research in emerging areas such as advanced materials, semiconductors, quantum technology and environmental sustainability would be critical to addressing national priorities and developing future technologies.

Stressing the need for sustained investment in research and innovation, Raksha Mantri referred to the Government's approval of Rs 1 lakh crore Research, Development and Innovation Scheme to catalyse private-sector investment in research & advanced technologies. "While public policy can create an enabling environment, institutions must nurture talent and generate ideas, and industry must help translate innovations into practical applications and scale them up," he said.



Through the 'Greater Than Us' campaign, IIT Kanpur aims to raise US\$1 billion by March 2029, which is the largest fundraising campaign ever undertaken by any IIT. Rs 4,155 crore, nearly half of the goal, has already been committed by alumni, donors, corporate partners, and the government. The objective is to strengthen IIT Kanpur's research infrastructure, nurture talent, and accelerate the development and commercialisation of indigenous technologies & innovations to support India's vision of becoming a developed nation by 2047.

Shri Rajnath Singh expressed confidence that the campaign would support stronger research capabilities, advanced facilities, opportunities for talented students and solutions to national & global challenges. He called upon the institute's alumni, industry, philanthropic supporters and institutional partners to contribute through financial support, mentorship, research partnerships and professional networks.



Prof Manindra Agrawal, Director, IIT Kanpur; Shri Awanish Kumar Awasthi, Advisor to the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh and faculty, students & alumni of the institute were present on the occasion.

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