Defence Forces must maintain highest level of operational readiness, with focus on domain awareness, cyber resilience & information integrity to counter emerging threats: Raksha Mantri at Air Force Station, Bagdogra

“Air Warriors deployed at Bagdogra serve as a robust shield for security of eastern sector”

‘Second Tour of Duty’ is a significant Diwali gift for Agniveers, says Shri Rajnath Singh

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Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh has called upon the Defence Forces to maintain the highest level of operational readiness, with special focus on strengthening domain awareness, cyber resilience and information integrity to effectively counter emerging security threats. Interacting with the personnel of the Indian Air Force (IAF) on the eve of Diwali at Air Force Station, Bagdogra, West Bengal, on November 7, 2026, he emphasised that the security landscape has become increasingly complex, with warfare extending beyond conventional engagements along the borders to encompass asymmetric warfare, proxy wars, cyber-attacks, drone swarms, information operations and narrative management.



“Often, the adversary avoids direct confrontation and instead seeks to exploit our vulnerabilities. Through social media, the adversary may attempt to sow doubt in the minds of the local population and our soldiers by spreading misleading information. In such a scenario, your role extends beyond that of an ordinary soldier,” said Raksha Mantri.

Describing Bagdogra as a strategically important region and a crucial link in India's security framework, particularly for the North-Eastern region, Shri Rajnath Singh commended the courage and dedication of the defence forces personnel towards safeguarding national interests. He stated that the Air Warriors deployed in the region serve as a robust shield for the security of the eastern sector, and their preparedness is fundamental to maintaining stability in the region.



Raksha Mantri underscored that discipline and courage remain indispensable, irrespective of technological advancements, stating that the conduct, bearing, language and restraint of the Defence Forces personnel shape the image of the military among local communities. Lauding the soldiers for discharging their duties with these qualities, he urged them to strengthen their engagement with the local population, particularly in and around

Bagdogra, and nurture the deep bond of trust and affection between the people and the Defence Forces. “The more you engage with the local community, the weaker the adversary’s conspiracies will become,” he said.



Reaffirming the Government's resolve to achieve ‘Aatmanirbhar Bharat’, Shri Rajnath Singh highlighted the growing contribution of Indian start-ups and industries in developing drones, anti-drone systems and advanced military equipment. He appreciated the defence forces for embracing indigenous technologies and acquiring new skills in drone operations and cyber security. He underlined the importance of making the military increasingly technology-driven to effectively address future security challenges.





Referring to the Cabinet’s approval of the 'Second Tour of Duty' for Agniveers, Raksha Mantri stated that the decision would provide Agniveers with another opportunity to serve the nation. He added that upon completion of the two-year engagement period, all Agniveers will get an opportunity to be enrolled as regular soldiers subject to their willingness and their meeting selection criteria. He termed the decision as a significant Diwali gift for Agniveers, reiterating the Government's commitment to the welfare of the Defence Forces personnel and their families.



Shri Rajnath Singh extended his Diwali greetings and wished the Air Warriors and their families good health, happiness and prosperity. He said that the personnel, despite missing their families during the festival, remain steadfast in ensuring the security of their fellow citizens. He expressed gratitude to their families for their sacrifices and contributions. He emphasised that while the soldiers remain committed towards safeguarding the borders, the nation will always stand by their families and ensure their well-being.

Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Ashutosh Dixit; Air Officer Commanding, Air Force Station, Bagdogra Air Commodore Manish Sharma; and other senior officials of the IAF were present on the occasion.



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