

# Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh says strong cooperation between India and France will continue to grow and contribute to global peace, prosperity and environmental sustainability.

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Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh today emphasised on the focus to equip Indian Air Force and enhance its capabilities, saying that the new Rafale Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft (MMRCA) will make India stronger and will give a boost to its air dominance exponentially to ensure peace and security in the region. In his address at the Rafale handing over Ceremony in Merignac, France, he said it was a historic and landmark day for the Indian Armed Forces.

“In India, today is Dussehra, the festival where we celebrate victory over evil. It is also the 87<sup>th</sup> Indian Air Force Day. Therefore, today’s day becomes symbolic in so many ways”, Shri Rajnath Singh said.

Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh says the strong cooperation between India and France will continue to grow and contribute to global peace, prosperity and environmental sustainability. He also stressed the importance of the ceremony saying it signifies the depth of strategic partnership between India and France.

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh also said he was glad in knowing that a large number of India Air Force officers and airmen are being trained in France for flying, maintenance support and logistics for handling Rafale fighter aircraft and hoped the training in French facilities will help the crew in acquiring knowledge and professional expertise required for performing their task in India.

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh pointed out that the Rafale Project Monitoring Team (PMT) from India has been positioned in France since August 2017 to ensure smooth implementation of the project. Shri Rajnath Singh said he was happy that the delivery of Rafale aircraft is on schedule and will add to the strength of Indian Air force.

“I look forward to flying in the Rafale aircraft. This will be a great honour and experience”, he added.

Raksha Mantri performed the ‘Shastra Puja’ on Rafale on the auspicious occasion of Vijayadashami.

Also, present on the occasion was French Minister of Armed Forces, Ms Florence Parly and Chief Executive Officer of Dassault Aviation, Mr Eric Trappier.

The Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) for 36 Rafale aircraft procurement was signed between the Government of India and Government of France on 23 September, 2016.

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