

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh calls for more R&D effort in Defence to achieve self-reliance

Posted On: 19 SEP 2019 5:43PM by PIB Delhi

India needs more R&D innovation and creation of cutting-edge technologies to become self-reliant in defence production, Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh said today while inaugurating the 7th edition of Engineers Conclave 2019 in Bengaluru. This year's conclave is based on two themes, 'Defence Technology & Innovation' and 'Transformation of Rural India Using Digital Technologies'.

Raksha Mantri said the Indian defence industry had not performed to its full potential in the past that led to the country's overwhelming dependence on imported arms. He emphasised that developing critical and cutting-edge technologies indigenously will make the country self-sufficient, saving the precious foreign exchange, which could be utilised in other development activities in the country. He described continuous innovation as the key to success for any nation, given the fast pace at which technology becomes obsolete every passing day.

"It is well said that when nations go to war, the one with the best technology is most likely to win", said Shri Rajnath Singh.

Stressing on the need for Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Defence, Shri Rajnath Singh said AI is capable of bringing significant transformations in the way future military operations would be conducted. He said the Government has already prepared a roadmap for making India a significant power of AI application in Defence.

Raksha Mantri emphasised on technology and innovation in the defence sector as it has enormous spin-off benefits for the masses as well.

Listing out the initiatives launched by the Government in this direction, Shri Rajnath Singh said Innovation for Defence Excellence (iDEX) scheme has been started to foster innovation and technology development in Defence and Aerospace by engaging Industries including MSMEs, Startups, Individual Innovators and R&D institutes. To encourage innovation, he said, 'Make in India' initiative has ensured that opportunities are given to MSMEs and Start-up companies. 'Start-up India' is providing a platform for conversion of new ideas into niche technology and its application, he added.

Reiterating the Government's resolve to make India a USD five trillion economy by 2024 and subsequently USD 10 trillion by 2030, Raksha Mantri said defence is the major sector which has to contribute significantly towards realisation of this level of growth. He expressed hope to achieve a turnover of USD 26 billion in Aerospace and Defence goods & services by 2025, creating employment for nearly 2-3 million people.

On 'Transformation of Rural India Using Digital Technologies', Raksha Mantri said in his earlier tenures as Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh and Union Minister of Agriculture, he always tried to ensure that policies and programmes of the Government are formulated taking into account the concerns of rural India. He said rural transformation is the basic requirement for the overall development of India.

Raksha Mantri voiced the Government's resolve of transforming the lives of farmers and people living in rural India. "The trinity of Jan-Dhan, Aadhaar and Mobile (JAM) had been rightly emphasised by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to bring about this transformation", he said.

Secretary, Department of Defence, R&D and Chairman DRDO, Dr G Satheesh Reddy, President, Indian National Academy of Engineering (INAE), Dr Sanak Mishra, and other officials of DRDO, ISRO, DPSUs, academia and industries were present at the inaugural function.

The 'Engineers Conclave' is being organised by INAE, in association with Navratna Defence PSU Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), from September 19-21, 2019, at the Bharat Electronics Academy for Excellence (BAE), Bengaluru.

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(Release ID: 1585580)