

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh calls for round-the-clock vigil from all agencies in Maritime domain to thwart any potential threats posed by 'non-state' as well as 'state-sponsored' terrorism

Confers President's Tatrakshak Medals and Tatrakshak Medals to ICG personnel

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Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh has called for a 24x7 vigil, co-ordination and pro-active approach from all agencies in the Maritime domain to thwart any potential threats posed by 'non-state' as well as 'state-sponsored' terrorism. He was addressing the Investiture Ceremony of Indian CoastGuard (ICG) in Chennai today.

Raksha Mantri voiced the Government's unwavering commitment to ensure that the people of the country feel safe and contribute towards nation-building. "The security at land is strongly linked to security at sea. Our country is facing significant challenges from 'non-state', as well as 'state-sponsored' terrorism. The attack of 26/11 happened through sea route only. It is the strong resolve of this government that we will not let such incidents to happen on our territory", said Shri Rajnath Singh.

Raksha Mantri also lauded ICG for playing a pivotal role in building the synergy and cohesion of efforts between all stakeholders responsible for ensuring safety and security in the Maritime zones. Describing it as vibrant, Shri Rajnath Singh said ICG has been at the forefront in evolving regional co-operation and is steadily working with international maritime agencies for lasting maritime peace in the Indian Ocean region. He expressed happiness that ICG has become a Maritime Force to reckon with and is responding to a multitude of challenges in the Maritime Sphere with professionalism and pride.

Shri Rajnath Singh acknowledged that ICG has made an impact in its Area of Responsibility due to its omnipresence and commitment for ensuring safer seas for mariners. "Each successful mission resonates the efficiency of the officers and men and highlights the effective response capabilities of this service", he said.

Raksha Mantri added that apart from saving one precious life every second day at sea, Indian Coast Guard was actively involved in saving over 4,000 precious lives during recent flood disaster relief operation "Sahayata" in Coastal States of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala. He said ICG also proved its prowess and reach by undertaking major fire-fighting operation onboard Merchant Ship Daniela off Colombo, Motor Tanker Genessa off Kandla and Merchant Vessel Maersk Honam on the fringes of Indian Search and Rescue Region and thus carved a niche among International Maritime community.

"The service created a Maritime history by seizing 1.5 Ton Heroin from Merchant Ship Henry, giving a setback to anti-national elements by averting misuse of funds that would have been generated from contraband. These are just a few of many such incidents wherein Indian Coast Guard has lived up to its reputation as 'Sentinels of Sea'", Shri Rajnath Singh added.

Listing out the measures being taken by the Government for President's Tatrakshak Medal and Tatrakshak Medals awardees, Raksha Mantri said a proposal to confer a scroll signed by the President of India for the awardees has been approved by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and is submitted to PMO. He also said a proposal for inclusion of ICG medals in Order of Precedence (OOP) is under consideration of MoD in

consultation with Ministry of Home Affairs so that the awardees are not deprived of the desiring prestige and benefits.

Congratulating all the awardees at the ceremony, Shri Rajnath Singh lauded the tremendous courage and dedication to the nation they displayed under testing conditions. He hoped that the recognition further motivates the ICG personnel and they go the extra mile while discharging the mandate of the vibrant maritime force.

Earlier, Raksha Mantri conferred gallantry and meritorious service medals to ICG personnel. A total of 61 awards including one President's Tatrakshak Medals (Gallantry), eight President's Tatrakshak Medals (Distinguished Service), 32 Tatrakshak Medals (Gallantry) and 20 Tatrakshak Medals (Meritorious Service) were conferred to the ICG personnel by Raksha Mantri.

The President Tatrakshak Medals and Tatrakshak Medals are awarded as recognition to selfless devotion to duty, exemplary courage and acts of valour under extreme condition to the officers and men.

Director General Indian Coast Guard K Natarajan, senior officials of MoD and Indian Coast Guard were present on the occasion.

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