

# Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh chairs Ambassadors' Round-table on DefExpo 2020;

## Calls for active international participation in the mega event

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In a major outreach to the defence manufacturing industries of the world, Ministry of Defence organised Ambassadors' Round Table conference on DefExpo 2020, chaired by Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh here today. The Round Table was aimed to brief the representatives of foreign missions based in New Delhi about the arrangements being made for DefExpo and elicit suggestions from them to further improve the experience. Heads of Missions and Defence Attaches of over 80 countries participated in the conference indicating the growing stature of the 11<sup>th</sup> mega biennial event, to be held in Uttar Pradesh capital Lucknow from February 5-8, 2020.

Addressing the conference, Raksha Mantri said, the DefExpo will not only provide countries with the opportunity to showcase their equipment and platforms, but also be able to explore the strengths and capabilities of India's defence industry for meeting operational goals.

"DefExpo is an opportunity to foster partnerships and be part of shared prosperity. These strong ties can boost investment, expand manufacturing, raise the level of technology and accelerate economic growth of our respective countries," Shri Rajnath Singh added. He said, India's defence sector has matured and is exploring mutually beneficial partnerships with friendly countries to set up industries in India and abroad.

Shri Rajnath Singh said, DefExpo will showcase Government's intent to achieve a turnover of USD 26 billion in aerospace and defence goods and services by 2025. He added the event will showcase India's plans for Defence Industrial Corridors in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu where investment commitments of about USD 1 billion have already been received. More than 100 business events and seminars are being planned with over 1,000 exhibitors expected at the mega event.

Raksha Mantri also urged the Ambassadors to impress upon the captains of their respective defence industries to participate in DefExpo 2020 in a big way so as to "dive deep into the strategic and business opportunities available and to establish strategic partnerships".

Impressing upon the Expo's sub-theme 'Digital Transformation of Defence', Shri Rajnath Singh said, digitalisation is the key to future security scenario as the spectrum of warfare is transiting from land, air & sea to cyber & space. He said, DefExpo will demonstrate India's ability in cyberspace and define its needs in the sector. "The challenge is not just to prepare for contingencies but also to repel threats from multiple sources and at the same time possess the

ability to respond proactively if needed,” he added.

Raksha Mantri reaffirmed the commitment of the Government to make India self-reliant with indigenous defence capabilities. “India has one of the largest defence industrial ecosystems in South and Southeast Asia and we aspire to further build on our strengths,” he said.

Shri Rajnath Singh also highlighted that in the last few years, the Government has been focussing on creating a defence industrial base which is technically competitive, providing viable manufacturing facilities and profitable business opportunities. He listed out various policy reforms in critical areas, including simplifying industrial licensing process, hike of Foreign Direct Investment cap to 49 per cent under automatic route and beyond 49 per cent under Government approval route, approval of Open General Export License policy and opening of testing & trial facilities for the private sector.

Raksha Mantri said, due to the policy reforms undertaken by the Government, defence production in both public and private sectors reached a record volume of Rs 80,502 crore in 2018-19. He set the target of Rs 90,000 crore for 2019-20. “We have achieved an export turnover of around Rs 10,700 crore in 2018-19, with the target of this year pegged at Rs 15,000 crore,” he added.

Department of Defence Production gave a Power Point presentation detailing every aspect related to DefExpo, including information on exhibition venue, facilities, number of registered participants till now, etc. A senior official of the Government of Uttar Pradesh gave a presentation informing the gathering about the investment opportunities in Uttar Pradesh, especially six Defence Industrial Corridor nodes of the state, *i.e.*, Agra, Aligarh, Chitrakoot, Jhansi, Kanpur and Lucknow.

Industrial Development Minister of Uttar Pradesh Shri Satish Mahana also addressed the gathering and assured them that any investment proposal would be cleared in a time-bound manner.

Shri Rajnath Singh also released the official DefExpo 2020 inaugural film on the occasion.

Raksha Rajya Mantri Shri Shripad Naik; Secretary (Defence Production) Shri Subhash Chandra and other senior officials of the Ministry of Defence participated in the meeting.

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