

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh witnesses prowess and fire power of Western Fleet during “day at sea” onboard INS Vikramaditya

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The Indian Navy is ready to defend the country against all threats, Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh said today while addressing the personnel of Western Fleet, during his “day at sea” onboard INS Vikramaditya off the Goa coast. After witnessing the prowess and fire power of the Western Fleet first hand, Raksha Mantri said, “I am most impressed to see the professionalism, commitment and spirited approach shown by the brave sailors of the Indian Navy. I am reassured that the security of our nation is in safe hands”.

Emphasising that security of India relies a lot on being strong at sea, Shri Rajnath Singh lauded the multi-dimensional approach adopted by the Navy to ensure safety and security in the country’s areas of maritime interest. He said, the Navy’s Mission Based Deployments at critical regions of the Indian Ocean have strengthened the maritime security environment in the region.

Raksha Mantri also commended the Western Fleet which was immediately deployed in a strong posture in the northern Arabian Sea when the Government effectively responded to the Pulwama attacks through strikes on terror camps in Balakot. He said, “Western Fleet degraded the ability of our adversary and ensured they did not attempt any misadventure at sea”. Shri Rajnath Singh termed as most significant the role of Indian Navy to have a credible “second strike” capability as a Nuclear deterrent.

Saying that Indian Naval ships are continuously deployed for anti-piracy operations, Raksha Mantri commended the Navy for demonstrating and re-affirming its role as a Net Security Provider in the Indian Ocean Region. He said, the Navy has been able to achieve credible deterrence by maintaining a very high degree of preparedness through regular training, quality maintenance and strategic situational awareness. He also termed naval deployments as an important tool of diplomacy which is essential to build bonds with friendly nations.

Describing Navy as the key enabler and guarantor of the India’s maritime security, Raksha Mantri said, India’s economic resurgence is directly linked to its overseas trade and energy needs, most of which is by sea. “About 90 percent of India’s international trade by volume and about 70 percent by value are carried by sea. As we move towards our goal of 5 trillion dollar economy; the volume of maritime trade will only grow in times to come. Thus, I firmly believe that the role of the Indian Navy in general and the Western Fleet in particular is also critical in ensuring the energy security and economic growth of the country”, he added.

Shri Rajnath Singh said the Government’s commitment towards building a strong and modern Navy was evident in the time of Atal ji also when strong policy decisions to increase funding for warship construction were taken in order to build ‘blue water’ capability for the Navy. He suggested a push for a ‘blue water’ navy considering the increasing prestige and economic power of the country.

Listing out the measures implemented by the Government in this direction, Raksha Mantri said, induction and integration of new state-of-the-art equipment through the Prime Minister’s ‘Make in India’ initiative is making the Indian Navy amongst the most advanced Navies of the world today. “Our indigenously built destroyers, frigates, submarines, patrol vessels and attack craft are a testimony of the industrial strength of the country and the role of the Navy towards empowering domestic technologies and industries is noteworthy”, he added.

On commissioning INS Khanderi, the second indigenously built Scorpene class submarine, launching ‘Nilgiri’, the first of the indigenous Project 17A frigates and commissioning the Aircraft Carrier Dock at

Naval Dockyard, Raksha Mantri said, “this is an indication of a self-reliant India and generates confidence about our maritime power and the bright future of the country.”

Recalling his visit to the world’s highest battle field at Siachen at the start of his term as Raksha Mantri, Shri Rajnath Singh saluted the unwavering commitment of the ‘Siachen Warriors’ to prevail in extreme harsh weather and highly treacherous terrain for maintaining the sanctity of Indian borders and ensuring utmost safety of fellow countrymen. He also said, his experience of flying the fourth-generation aircraft “Tejas” made him appreciate the professionalism, courage and bravery of the pilots of Indian Air Force even more.

During his stay on INS Vikramaditya, the biggest ship of Indian Navy, Raksha Mantri witnessed a wide range of naval operations including weapon firing by the fighter aircraft and night flying operations by helicopter from the deck of the Aircraft Carrier. In addition, surface shoots, Missile and Rocket firing by various ships Underway Replenishment with multiple ships and submarines operations were also demonstrated. Shri Rajnath Singh witnessed operations at sea which included simultaneous underway replenishment of multiple warships by the tanker, ensuring prolonged sustenance at sea.

Raksha Mantri joined the ship’s crew during morning Yoga followed by a walk around the Aircraft Carrier. He was also briefed on the reach of Indian Navy and enhanced Maritime Domain Awareness. He also spoke to INS Mysore, deployed in the Strait of Hormuz, through video conferencing. Shri Rajnath Singh also interacted with the crew of INS Vikramaditya over Barakhana.

The visit culminated with the Steam Past and Fly Past - the traditional naval salutation by ships, submarines and aircraft of Western Naval Command.

The Raksha Mantri was accompanied by the Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Karambir Singh, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief Western Naval Command Vice Admiral Ajith Kumar and Rear Admiral Jasjit Singh Flag Officer Commanding Western Fleet.

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