

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh begins first day of DeExpo 2020 by holding meetings with his counterparts from UAE, UK, Maldives, Kyrgyzstan and Oman

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Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh, today began the first day of DefExpo 2020 by holding successive meetings with Defence Ministers of five Countries – UAE, UK, Maldives, Kyrgyzstan and Oman.

The DefExpo, largest of its kind, is being held for the first time in Lucknow, capital of Uttar Pradesh.

In the bilateral meeting with His Excellency Mohammed Al Bowardi, MoS for Defence Affairs of the UAE, Raksha Mantri Shri Rajanath Singh exchanged views on further strengthening the cooperation in Defence Affairs. They expressed satisfaction at various dimensions of the ongoing Defence cooperation between the two countries. Welcoming the UAE Minister, Shri Rajnath Singh invited him to explore varied cultural and touristic potential of Uttar Pradesh. The warmth and bonhomie shared between the top leadership of both the countries over the years has resulted in transforming bilateral cooperation to a strategic partnership.

In the delegation level bilateral meeting with UK Minister for Defence procurement Mr James Heappey, Raksha Mantri underlined the growing ties between the two countries. The discussions while touching on various aspects related to defence cooperation, also focussed on opportunities to further enhance defence engagements between the two countries. They have agreed to meet again tomorrow to continue the parleys.

In the third meeting of the morning, Raksha Mantri held bilateral level talks with Her Excellency Uza Mariya Ahmed Didi, Defence Minister for Maldives. The Maldivian minister expressed her country's gratitude for India's assistance over the years and recently in bringing back Maldivian students from the Corona virus affected Wuhan region, China.

She underlined the opportunities that exist to further enhance defence cooperation especially in the Maritime domain, to which Raksha Mantri responded positively. Both the Ministers noted that Cooperation in the field of defence industry also forms an important part of strategic partnership between both the countries.

Major General Raiimberdi Duishenbiev, Chief of General Staff of Kyrgyz Armed Forces and Defence Minister of Kyrgyzstan met Raksha Mantri and discussed a wide range of issues pertaining to defence cooperation between the two countries. In a significant decision, Both leaders agreed that the Joint Exercise involving the Special Forces of India and Kyrgyzstan named Khanjar VII shall be held soon in India. It was also decided that the first Joint Working group between the two countries on Defence Cooperation would be held within the next two to three months.

Holding the last and fifth meeting of the morning with HE Badr Saud Harib Al Busaidi, Minister for Defence Affairs, Sultanate of Oman, Raksha Mantri stressed that Defence cooperation was the key pillar of bilateral relations between the two countries. Both Ministers discussed measures to further strengthen defence partnership, by enhancing joint maritime security exercises. Raksha Mantri expressed willingness of India's defence industry especially Defence PSUs to work more closely with Oman.

The common theme among views expressed by the visiting dignitaries was to express gratitude for the invitation to visit DefExpo 2020 and conveyed their best wishes for the success of the event, which had proved to be an effective platform for sharing, collaborating and cooperating on various defence technologies. There was also unanimity on further exploring and strengthening bilateral relations with India, in particular in defence domain to expedite Joint projects. Raksha Mantri wished all the visiting delegates to have a pleasant stay here and invited them to visit the various tourist destinations in Uttar Pradesh.

ABB/GP/Anand/Rajib

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