

**PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU (DEFENCE WING)
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**

‘हर काम देश के नाम’

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India committed to freedom of navigation, overflight & unimpeded lawful commerce in international waters: Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh at 10th ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting-Plus in Indonesia

Calls for active collaboration among ASEAN and Plus countries for peace, prosperity & security in the region

“Dialogue & diplomacy way forward for global peace & stability”

India’s proposal to co-chair Expert Working Group on Counter-Terrorism endorsed by ADMM-Plus

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh attended the 10th ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting - Plus (ADMM-Plus) in Jakarta, Indonesia on November 16, 2023. In his address, he affirmed the ASEAN centrality and appreciated its role in promoting dialogue & consensus in the region. He also reiterated India’s commitment to freedom of navigation, overflight and unimpeded lawful commerce in the international waters in accordance with international laws, including United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982.

The Raksha Mantri called for regional security initiatives that are consultative and development-oriented to reflect the larger consensus among various stakeholders. He committed towards nurturing practical, forward-looking and result-oriented cooperation with ADMM-Plus for enhancing maritime security in the region.

Highlighting that the conflicts extract a terrible toll in terms of human lives lost and livelihoods destroyed, disturb the stability at regional as well as global level and have adverse implications for food security, energy security etc, Shri Rajnath Singh reiterated India’s commitment to work with ASEAN and Plus countries to ensure peace, prosperity and security, which is an apt theme for this year’s ADMM Plus. He cited Mahatma Gandhi’s famous quote on peace *“there is no way to peace, peace is the only way”*.

The Raksha Mantri stressed the role of dialogue and diplomacy to have enduring peace, and in ensuring global stability. He reaffirmed India's message to the world at large, that "this is not an era of war", and spoke about the imperative to give up the "us versus them" mindset.

Shri Rajnath Singh appreciated ASEAN Member States' enthusiastic participation in India-ASEAN activities, particularly the Initiative for Women in UN Peacekeeping Operations, and Initiative for Marine Plastic Pollution Response. He also appreciated ASEAN Member States' active participation in the maiden ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise held in May this year, as well as in the Expert Working Group (EWG) on Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief (HADR) activities, of which India and Indonesia are co-chairs in the current 2020-2023 cycle.

Recognising that terrorism is a serious threat to international peace and security, including in the ASEAN region, India proposed to co-chair the EWG on Counter-Terrorism. This proposal was endorsed by ADMM-Plus as terrorism remains a serious concern to countries in the region.

ABB/Savvy