

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

‘हर काम देश के नाम’

New Delhi, Asadha 01, 1944
Wednesday, June 22, 2022

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh & his Australian counterpart Mr Richard Marles discuss ways to enhance defence cooperation during bilateral talks in New Delhi

Joint Press Statement

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh and Australian Deputy Prime Minister & Minister for Defence Mr Richard Marles held a bilateral meeting in New Delhi on June 22, 2022. The two Ministers reviewed the existing defence cooperation activities which have been increasing despite challenges of COVID-19 pandemic and discussed ways to enhance further cooperation.

The Ministers reviewed the defence and security pillars of the India-Australia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. They reaffirmed their commitment towards implementation of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership based on mutual trust and understanding, common interests and shared values, of democracy and rule of law. They welcomed the growing diversity and frequency of defence exercises and exchanges between the two countries and undertook to build upon operational engagements through the India-Australia Mutual Logistics Support Arrangement.

Both Ministers committed to give fillip to the India-Australia Joint Working Group (JWG) on Defence Research and Materiel Cooperation, which will meet in Australia later this year. This JWG is a crucial mechanism for boosting ties between defence industries. The Ministers discussed further opportunities for industrial cooperation between India and Australia to increase the resilience of supply chains and deliver capabilities to their respective defence forces. Both sides agreed to explore means to grow connections and opportunities between Indian and Australian defence industrial bases.

Both Ministers welcomed the plan to commence the landmark General Rawat Young Officer Exchange Programme in the latter half of 2022, which was announced during the virtual summit meeting between the Prime Ministers of the two countries on March 21, 2022.

The Ministers reviewed strategic challenges and the regional security situation and reaffirmed their shared objective of an open, free, inclusive, prosperous and rules-based Indo Pacific region. They looked forward to India's participation in Australia's Indo Pacific Endeavour exercise in October 2022.

Earlier in the day, the Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister of Australia visited the National War Memorial and paid homage to the war heroes by laying a wreath at the monument. The Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister of Australia was accorded a ceremonial Guard of Honour before the bilateral meeting with Shri Rajnath Singh.

Mr Richard Marles is on a visit to India from June 20-23, 2022. On June 21, 2022, he visited Goa which included a tour of Goa Shipyard Limited and a display of India's growing prowess in indigenous drone development and autonomous vehicle technology.

ABB/Savvy