

**PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU (DEFENCE WING)
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Strong & confident New India is well-equipped to give a befitting reply to anyone who casts an evil eye, says Raksha Mantri during ‘Kargil Vijay Diwas’ event in Jammu

Voices Government’s commitment to ensure jointness and Aatmanirbharta in the Armed Forces crucial to fight future wars

“Making India a global superpower will be a fitting tribute to our fallen heroes”

Abrogation of Article 370 has brought a new dawn of hope to the aspirations of the people of J&K: Shri Rajnath Singh

“India has become a strong & confident nation which is well-equipped to protect its people from anyone who tries to cast an evil eye,” said Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh during an event organised to commemorate ‘Kargil Vijay Diwas’ in Jammu on July 24, 2022. Paying glowing tributes to the freedom fighters & the Armed Forces personnel who have laid down their lives since independence in the service of the Nation, Shri Rajnath Singh stated that it was the spirit of national pride at the core of their values that protected the unity and integrity of India. He asserted that the sole aim of the Government, led by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, is to safeguard the interests of the Nation and it has taken a series of steps to develop a self-reliant defence ecosystem that provides indigenous state-of-the-art weapons/equipment to the Armed Forces to fight all kinds of future wars.

“Our priority is to achieve Aatmanirbharta in Defence as it is central to developing a robust security apparatus for the safety and security of the nation. To realise this vision, 68% of the defence budget has been earmarked for procurement of defence equipment from domestic sources. From a net importer, we have now become a net exporter which is not only catering to our own needs, but is also fulfilling the requirements of our friendly countries, in line with the ‘Make in India, Make for the World’ vision. Due to the recent measures taken by the Government, India today finds itself among the top 25 exporters of the world in defence items. We have set a target to achieve Rs 35,000 crore worth of exports by 2025 and become a top exporter in the times to come. Our aim is to make India a global superpower. This will be a fitting tribute to our fallen heroes who

made the supreme sacrifice while dreaming of an India which is strong, prosperous, self-reliant and victorious,” said the Raksha Mantri.

Sharing his views on the numerous challenges faced by India post-independence, Shri Rajnath Singh said, the entire area of Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) and Ladakh became the ‘Main War Theatre’ during 1948, 1962, 1965, 1971 and 1999 wars, when enemies tried to cast an evil eye, but whose plans were thwarted by the gallant Indian soldiers. He spoke about the brave deeds of Brigadier Usman & Major Somnath Sharma in 1948; Major Shaitan Singh’s valour in 1962; India’s historic victory in 1971 war and the contribution of Kargil bravehearts Captain Vikram Batra & Captain Manoj Pandey who laid down their lives to protect the unity & integrity of India and continue to be an inspiration to the people, especially the youth. He also paid respects to the Indian soldiers who displayed unmatched bravery during the Galwan valley incident and ensured that the Indian tricolour continues to fly high.

“After tasting defeats in direct wars of 1965 and 1971, Pakistan adopted the path of Proxy War. For over two decades, it has tried to ‘Bleed India with Thousand Cuts’. But, time and again, our brave soldiers have shown that no one can disturb the unity, integrity and sovereignty of India,” the Raksha Mantri added, assuring the Nation that the Armed Forces are ready to face all future challenges.

Shri Rajnath Singh remembered the then Prime Minister late Atal Bihari Vajpayee for his leadership and words of encouragement to the Armed Forces personnel during the Kargil war despite numerous challenges and international pressure. He termed the victory as a prime example of jointness among the three Services and their coordination with the Government which safeguarded the sovereignty & integrity of the nation during testing times. “The Kargil war underlined the dire need to achieve jointness and self-reliance in the defence sector. It has been our endeavour to achieve these qualities to remain prepared for future challenges. Setting up of Joint Theatre Commands and reforms to achieve self-reliance in defence are the steps taken in that direction,” he added.

Shri Rajnath Singh also made special mention of the support extended by the people of J&K to the Armed Forces, commending their commitment to safeguard the interests of the Nation like all other states. He stated that J&K will always be an integral part of India and the Government is ensuring that the Union Territory, like the rest of the country, touches newer heights of progress. Terming Article 370 as an artificial legal barrier, he asserted that its abrogation brought a new dawn of hope to the dreams and aspirations of the people of J&K, especially the youth. The decision opened new avenues for the welfare of the people and the Union Territory is now progressing at a much faster rate, he said.

On PoK and Gilgit-Baltistan, the Raksha Mantri stated that these areas are illegally occupied by Pakistan and a resolution to free it has been unanimously passed in Parliament of India. A number of serving Armed Forces personnel as well as veterans, including Param Vir Chakra awardee Captain Bana Singh, were among those present on the occasion.

ABB/Savvy