

**PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU (DEFENCE WING)
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‘हर काम देश के नाम’

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**Raksha Mantri hands over a Fast Patrol Vessel & a Landing Craft
Assault ship to Maldives on Day 2 of his visit**

**Describes it as a symbol of shared commitment towards peace &
security in Indian Ocean Region**

**India offers enhanced defence partnership to friendly countries
accommodative of national priorities & capacities, says Shri
Rajnath Singh**

**Calls for collaborative efforts to deal with common challenges
faced by IOR, including climate change & sustainable exploitation
of maritime resources**

**RM calls on Maldivian President & discusses ways to further
strengthen defence ties; Assures India’s continued support to the
nation**

On the second day of his 3-day visit to the Maldives, Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh handed over a Fast Patrol Vessel and a Landing Craft Assault ship to the Maldives National Defence Forces (MNDF) on May 02, 2023. The Fast Patrol Vessel, capable of coastal and offshore surveillance at high speeds, was commissioned as MNDF Coast Guard ship Huravee. President of Maldives Mr Ibrahim Mohamed Solih and Defence Minister Ms Mariya Ahmed Didi were present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Rajnath Singh described the handing over of the two ‘Made in India’ platforms as a symbol of the shared commitment of India and the Maldives towards peace and security in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). He stated that India, through a robust defence ecosystem, has significantly enhanced its

manufacturing capabilities to further support the capacity building of partner countries.

“India has emerged as a leading defence exporter in recent years. A defence manufacturing ecosystem has been created which has the advantage of abundant technical manpower. We produce world-class equipment to meet not only our own needs, but also for exports. India offers an enhanced defence partnership to friendly foreign countries, that is accommodative of their national priorities and capacities. We wish to create symbiotic relationships where we can learn from each other, grow together and create a win-win situation for all. India’s commitment to support the Maldives will only get stronger with time,” the Raksha Mantri said.

On India’s strong defence cooperation with the nation, Shri Rajnath Singh asserted that the ties emanate from the twin policies of ‘Neighbourhood First’ and ‘SAGAR’ (Security and Growth for All in the Region). He recalled Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi’s visit to the Maldives in June 2019, during which he emphasised that “‘Neighbourhood First’ is our priority and in the neighbourhood, ‘Maldives is priority’.”

The Raksha Mantri called for enhanced cooperation among nations in the IOR to address the common challenges faced by the region. “The Indian Ocean is our shared space. The primary responsibility for peace, stability and prosperity in the region rests with those who live in the region. Peace and security of a region are best secured with cooperation and collaboration of the regional players,” he said.

Shri Rajnath Singh identified sustainable exploitation of resources and climate change as the most important common challenges faced by the IOR. He called for collaborative efforts towards ensuring that the maritime expanse of the Indian Ocean is peaceful and the resources are optimally harnessed for regional prosperity. Sustainable exploitation of maritime resources is an important means for sustained growth and development of nations across the IOR, he said.

On climate change, the Raksha Mantri said, it has a huge impact on the maritime environment and its effects can pose challenges for taking forward national and regional aspirations. Pointing out that the Maldives is particularly exposed to the vagaries of climate change, he voiced India’s willingness to work with its neighbour for adaptation and mitigation. “India has been the first responder in a large number of

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) requirements in the region in the past many years. We look forward to building upon each other's expertise by collaborative engagement," he said.

Earlier in the day, Shri Rajnath Singh called on Maldivian President Mr Ibrahim Mohamed Solih. Discussions were held on ongoing projects and ways to further strengthen defence ties. The Maldivian President expressed gratitude for India's continued aid and support to the Maldives in various sectors, stating that it is a testament to New Delhi's special regard for the nation. He also conveyed the Maldives' commitment towards strengthening this relationship. The Raksha Mantri spoke about the progress of various developmental projects undertaken by India in the Maldives and assured continued support.

Shri Rajnath Singh reached Male on May 01, 2023. On the first day of his engagements, he held talks with his Maldivian counterpart and Foreign Minister of Maldives Mr Abdulla Shahid.

ABB/Savvy