

INDIAN DEFENCE & AEROSPACE SUMMIT

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MAKE-IN-INDIA IN DEFENCE SECTOR WILL HELP REALISE PM'S \$5 TRILLION ECONOMY DREAM

The 'Indian Defence and Aerospace Summit 2019' provided the perfect platform for Indian defence and global diplomatic sectors' top names to interact on various issues as important as defence and aerospace.

TSG BUREAU
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and the Chiefs of the three Armed Forces have a road map ready to realise Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision to make India a \$5 trillion economy by 2024 and that can be made possible by "Make-in-India" in the defence sector.

The "Indian Defence and Aerospace Summit 2019" organised by NewsX and The Sunday Guardian (iTV Network) at The Lalit hotel in the national capital on Saturday, provided the perfect platform for Indian defence and

global diplomatic sector's top names to interact on various issues related to defence and aerospace, including opportunities and challenges. The summit saw the presence of luminaries like Defence Minister Rajnath Singh (through video conferencing), Army Chief Bipin Rawat, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Karambir Singh, Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal R.K.S. Bhadauria, besides several diplomats and top Army and government officials.

Welcoming the guests at the summit, Kartikeya Sharma, Founder and Promoter of iTV Network, said that he was delighted to be part



Kartikeya Sharma, Founder and Promoter of iTV Network, welcomes the guests at the summit as Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is about to deliver his inaugural address through video link.



General Bipin Rawat, Chairman-COSC (Chiefs of Staff Committee) addressing at the summit.



Admiral Karambir Singh, Chief of the Naval Staff, addressing the summit.



Air Chief Marshal R.K.S. Bhadauria, Chief of the Air Staff, addressing at the summit.

of a platform that brought together key players in the field from across the globe to deliberate on issues as important as defence and aerospace.

Rajnath Singh, Minister of Defence, thanked the iTV Network and said that such platforms help propel both the industry and the government towards planning and policy implementation.

Speaking about the paramount importance of both internal and external security of a country, Singh said, "Security of any country is of prime importance for the development of the nation. If the borders of the countries are not secured, if there is no internal peace, then the dream of development would be a far-fetched one." Singh emphasised on promoting domestic industries in the Defence sector. He said that the Defence sector will play a key role in achieving the target of a \$5 trillion economy by 2024.

The Union Defence Minister also said that the domestic Defence industry will be built in the country and the government is working on it. He said that the BJP-led government at the Centre is all set to take the initiative of making India a global super-

power in terms of Defence. "In this regard, the government has already set up two defence industrial corridors—one in Tamil Nadu and the other in Uttar Pradesh. This is being set up to build state-of-the-art infrastructure in terms of defence infrastructure—both from the support of the government as well as the industry."

He further said that the country's Air Force has been strengthened with the involvement of Tejas and Rafale.

In 2018-19, the Defence sector produced Rs 80,000 crore. "We want to reach Rs one lakh crore in defence production by next year and this will be a significant contribution towards the \$5 trillion dollar economy target," Singh said.

ARMY CHIEF PITCHES FOR 'MAKE IN INDIA' IN DEFENCE

Army Chief General Bipin Rawat set the tone of the summit by pitching for "Make in India" initiatives in the field of Indian Defence production.

"The Indian Army has witnessed the power shift and that is why it is giving utmost importance to a public-private partnership for de-

veloping indigenous defence products. In this regard, the Indian Army wants to utilise the strength and capabilities of start-ups in indigenous defence projects," Rawat said.

He further added that the "Make in India" initiative is helping minimise defence expenditure by a huge margin. Without going into details, he said a specific product, that used to cost around Rs 80 lakh, was manufactured in the country using home-grown technology at the expense of only Rs 30 lakh.

"The Indian Army through the 'Make in India' initiative have also allowed *suo moto* proposals to come from the industry to the armed forces and 11 of such proposals have already reached us," General Rawat said.

He further added that bureaucratic red tapism is being looked at to give quicker clearances to industry looking forward to work in defence production and to promote home grown technologies, a Rs 100 crore technological development fund for defence production has been given a go-ahead.

"We are hugely optimistic and if I may say so, we will fight and win the next war with homegrown technology and equipment," General

RAWAT SAID. NAVY, AIR FORCE CHIEFS FOR GREATER INDUSTRY PARTICIPATION IN DEFENCE MANUFACTURING

The chiefs of the Indian Navy and the Indian Air Force advocated for greater participation of the Indian defence manufacturing industry with the government. Speaking at the summit, Indian Navy Chief Admiral Karambir Singh and IAF Chief Air Chief Marshal R.K.S. Bhadauria said utilising the strength of the MSME sector and new start-ups would prove crucial in stepping up the rate of production apart from cutting down on the cost and time, which was also emphasised by General Bipin Rawat.

Addressing the concluding session of the day-long event, Air Chief Marshal Bhadauria said the IAF faced the biggest challenge of sustaining the existing fleet of aircraft. While the Indian aerospace industry was already occupied with production of SU30s, Jaguars and Mirage 2000s, it is largely taken up by the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and this is where the private players need to step in. "The biggest challenge for private players

in the Indian aerospace sector is stepping into the HAL. This is one thing that needs to be resolved quickly," he said. "The involvement of the private players is important in order to increase the rate of production and cutting down the cost and time while ensuring the quality of the product. Failing this, the whole effort of the government and the Indian Air Force behind energising the aerospace industry will go waste," the Air Force chief said.

Air Chief Marshal Bhadauria, however, maintained that development of engines for the aircraft was the biggest

challenge before the industry even as the dependence on DRDO for weapons had begun to reduce in the last couple of years.

Indian Navy chief Admiral Karambir Singh also exhorted the industry to collaborate with the Indian Navy in the area of warship building which, he said, had the greatest potential in terms of private partnership. He said warship construction required 6.5 times greater workforce as compared to building commercial ships and hence this segment offered great opportunity for the industry.



Dr Ajay Kumar, Defence Secretary, addressing at the summit.



Admiral Tim Fraser CB, Vice Chief of the defence staff, UK addressing at the summit.



(L-R) Dr S. Guruprasad, DGDRDO, British High Commissioner Sir Dominic Asquith KCMG, DG K. Natarajan, Indian Coast Guard chief, Lt. Gen. M.M. Narvane, Vice Chief-Indian Army, Kartikeya Sharma, Founder, iTV Network, and Ashish Singh, Strategic Affairs Editor, NewsX at the summit.

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