

## SELF-RELIANCE IN DEFENCE IS FIRST AND FOREMOST PRIORITY

## India sourced ₹1.20L-cr worth military hardware: Rajnath

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi, October 7

INDIA PROCURED MILITARY hardware and weapons worth ₹1,20,000 crore from domestic sources by end of 2024-25 as it is increasingly focusing on boosting self-reliance to confront national security challenges, Defence minister Rajnath Singh said on Tuesday.

In an address at an event, Singh said self-reliance in defence is not just a matter of production or economy but it is the "first and foremost" priority as it is linked to India's strategic autonomy as well as sovereignty.

"Defence and security are the collective responsibility of the entire nation and strengthening the defence sector is not just the duty of one institution or government but the shared resolve of all Indians," he said at a conference.

In his remarks, Singh called upon states and Union territories to become active partners in building a robust, globally competitive defence manufacturing ecosystem.

He asserted that self-reliance in defence is not just a matter of production or economy for us, it is first and foremost a matter of strategic autonomy and is directly linked to sovereignty.

Singh said the government is fully aware of the changing dynamics of battle-field, especially the importance of non-contact warfare such as use of drones, and preparing for it accordingly.

In this context, he underlined the importance of enhancing India's own defence industries to meet myriad security challenges.

"In 2021-22, our capital acquisition from domestic sources was around ₹74,000 crore, but by the end of 2024-25, the capital acquisition



Union defence minister Rajnath Singh inspects an exhibition during the conference on opportunities of defence manufacturing at Vigyan Bhawan, in New Delhi, on Tuesday

## Goyal: Qatari firms keen to partner with Indian firms

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi, October 7

## COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday said there is a lot of excitement in Qatar about

forging partnerships with Indian businesses, not only for investments in the two countries but also for collaborating on third-country projects.

Citing an example, he said

that Qatar-based Al Balagh is a

partner with Larsen &amp; Toubro,

and they have completed pro-

jects in Qatar, with plans to

undertake similar projects in

third countries where they can

jointly undertake the contract-

ing work.

"There is a lot of excitement in

Qatar for attracting partnerships with Indian businesses, both for investment in India

and Qatar, as also for doing

third country projects in part-

nership between Qatar and

Indian businesses," he told

reporters here after meeting Al

Balagh Chairman Sherida Saad

Jubran Al Kaabi here.

He also met Qatar Develop-

ment Bank CEO Abdulrahman

Hesham Al Sowaidi.

The Qatari government is

also looking at third country

projects for which, as they

inform me, the Qatar Develop-

ment Bank is willing to give

guarantees for financing," he

said.

The minister said that

Indian businesses should

seriously consider such guar-

anteed financing for partnering

with Qataris, business persons

in third countries.

These partnerships are

important as India and Qatar

will soon finalise the contours

to negotiate a free trade agree-

ment and the pact is expected

to be concluded by the middle

or third quarter of next year.

The minister is here for a

two-day visit. He is leading a

business delegation to deepen

trade and investments

between the two countries.

Qatar is an important trad-

ing partner of India in the Gulf

Cooperation Council (GCC)

with bilateral trade of over

\$14.15 billion in 2024-25.

GCC members are Bahrain,

Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi

Arabia, and the United Arab

Emirates (UAE).

In a free trade pact, two

countries either significantly

reduce or eliminate import

duties on maximum goods

traded between them. They

also ease norms to promote

trade in services and attract

investments.

The trade relationship with

Qatar remains heavily skewed

toward energy imports, with

petroleum crude and gas prod-

ucts making up nearly 90% of

India's total imports from

Qatar.

India's exports to Qatar

totalled \$1.68 billion, while

imports surged to \$ 12.46 bil-

lion, producing a substantial

trade deficit of \$ 10.78 billion

in the last fiscal.

Key energy components

imported by India from Qatar

include liquefied natural gas,

liquefied butanes, liquefied

propane, petroleum crude, and

other petroleum products.

The other imports from the

Middle East nation include fer-

tilisers, organic chemicals,

plastic raw materials, alu-

minium and aluminium prod-

ucts, dye intermediates, and

other organic chemicals.

India's exports to Qatar

reflected mixed trends across

sectors.

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## Political storm in flood-hit Bengal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Siliguri/New Delhi, October 7

assault at Nagrakata in Jalpaiguri district and enquired about his health.

The hospital visit came hours after the Lok Sabha Secretariat sought a factual note within three days from the Union Home Ministry on the attack.

Parliament officials said the Secretariat has written to the Ministry of Home Affairs to obtain a "factual note" from the West Bengal government within three days.

Television visuals showed Banerjee entering the hospital and speaking softly to the injured parliamentarian and his family.

"Do you have diabetes? Are you taking insulin and medicines regularly?" she was heard asking Murmu, before consulting doctors and assuring that the government would extend all necessary help.

"If you need any assistance or further treatment elsewhere, please let me know," Banerjee told the family.

## PM to inaugurate final phase of Mumbai's first underground Metro line today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Mumbai, October 7

MUMBAI'S FIRST FULLY underground metro corridor will become operational on the entire route when Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday inaugurates its 10.99-km-long final stretch between Acharya Atre Chowk and Cuffe Parade stations, officials said on Tuesday.

The 33.5-km Aqua Line (Metro Line 3) from Cuffe Parade in south Mumbai to Aarey/JVL in Goregaon is completely underground with two phases of the corridor currently operational (Aarey/JVL-Bandra-Kurla Complex and BKC-Acharya Atre Chowk).

The Phase 2B was constructed at an estimated cost of ₹1,195 crore and will provide seamless connectivity to south Mumbai's heritage district and direct connectivity to govern-

ment administrative hubs and business districts. In Phase 2B, the Aqua Line is integrated with Central Railway at Mumbai Central station and with Western Railway at Mumbai Central and Churchgate. It will improve the access to financial institutions like RBI and BSE, besides providing connectivity to business districts at Fort, Nariman Point and Kala Ghoda.

The entire Aqua Line has been constructed at a cost of over ₹3,270 crore and its operation will mark a major milestone in Mumbai's urban transport transformation.

"Metro Line 3 is expected to reduce the load of suburban Railway by 15%, operator Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation Ltd (MMRCL) claimed.

The prime minister, who will

be on a two-day Mumbai visit,

will inaugurate Phase 2B of

the line on Tuesday evening.

The final stretch will add 11

underground stations to Metro

Line 3.

The Phase 2B was constructed at an estimated cost of

₹1,195 crore and will provide

seamless connectivity to south

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