

Desi def production hit record ₹1.3L crore in 2023-24: Rajnath

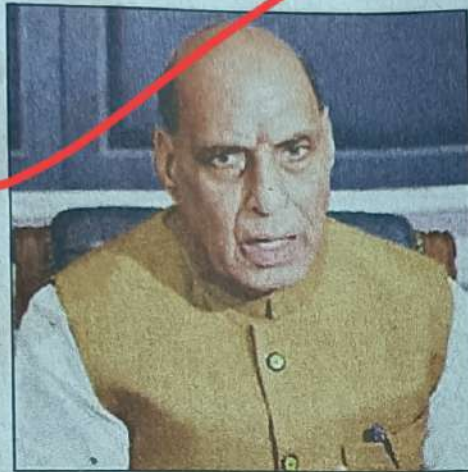
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: India recorded the highest-ever annual domestic defence production in 2023-24, reaching Rs 1.3 lakh crore in terms of value, which represents a 16.7% growth over the previous fiscal, defence minister Rajnath Singh said on Friday.

Stating that the 'Make in India' programme is crossing new milestones, year after year, under PM Modi, Singh said govt has an "unwavering resolve" to develop the country as a leading global defence manufacturing hub.

Of the total value of production in 2023-24, 79% was contributed by defence PSUs and other PSUs manufacturing defence items, while around 21% by the private sector. "The data shows that in terms of absolute value, both defence PSUs/PSUs and the private sector have recorded a steady growth in defence production," the ministry said.

"The feat has been achieved due to the policy reforms and initiatives as well as the ease of doing business



Govt has an 'unwavering resolve' to develop India as a leading defence manufacturing hub, Rajnath said

brought in the last 10 years, with focus on attaining self-reliance. The indigenisation efforts have been pursued aggressively," it added.

Moreover, increasing arms exports have also contributed to the overall growth in defence production. India's defence exports touched a high of Rs 21,083 crore in 2023-24, reflecting a growth of 32.5% over the last fiscal when the figure was Rs 15,920 crore. "In the last five years (since 2019-20), the value of defence production has been increasing steadily, and grown by over 60%," it said.

Army gets first 35,000 'Made in India' AK-203s

New Delhi: The first 35,000 Kalashnikov AK-203 assault rifles assembled in India have finally been delivered to the Army by the Indo-Russia Rifles Private Ltd joint venture, ahead of the Modi-Putin summit next week.

"Around 10,000 of the 35,000 AK-203 rifles have already been inducted into Army battalions after the requisite tests," an officer said.

•The manufacture of over six lakh AK-203 rifles, which have an effective range of 300-metre, will be spread over 10 years at the joint venture's Korwa factory in Amethi district of UP. The 7.62x39 mm caliber rifles are supposed to cater to the overall needs of the over 11-lakh strong Army as well as the IAF and Navy.

The AK-203 project was announced in 2018 but production at the Korwa factory finally began last year. TNN

Agniveers part of Army, should not be dragged into politics: Ex-IAF chief

NEW DELHI, July 5 (IANS)

FORMER Indian Air Force (IAF) Chief and BJP leader R.K.S. Bhadauria on Thursday refuted Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's claim that a slain Agniveer was not paid the compensation amount.

Saying that the Army and the families of soldiers should not be dragged into politics, Bhadauria told IANS that the Indian Army has already clarified the issue and has also shared the details of the ex-gratia amount given to the family members of martyred Agniveer Ajay Singh. "I want to assure the youth that Agniveers are part of the Indian Army,"



he said, adding that an Agniveer gets equal treatment and compensation like a normal soldier, except pension.

"Have faith in the Army, do not follow politics, and read the rules and laws yourself before joining the Army," the former IAF chief said.

US-UK launch 3 airstrikes against Houthi targets

SANAA, July 5 (IANS)

WARPLANES of the US-UK coalition launched three airstrikes against Houthi targets in Yemen's Red Sea province of Hodeidah, according to the Houthi-run Al-Masirah TV and witnesses. Al-Masirah TV reported that the strikes hit the north-western district of Alluhayah and the southern district of Bayt al-Faqih in the province on Thursday.

Locals said the strikes hit mobile military targets of the Houthi group, reports Xinhua news agency.

The US-UK coalition has not yet commented on the strikes.

Meanwhile, on Wednesday, the US Central Command said its forces destroyed two radar sites in the Houthi-controlled areas and two Houthi drone boats in the Red Sea.

The Houthi group, which controls much of northern Yemen, began in November last year to launch anti-ship ballistic missiles and armed drones at what they said were Israeli-linked ships transiting the Red Sea to show solidarity with the Palestinians under attack by Israel in the Gaza Strip.

Defence production at record high of Rs 1.27 lakh cr

NEW DELHI, July 5 (PTI)

INDIA'S annual defence production has hit a record high of approximately Rs 1.27 lakh crore in 2023-24, with the Make in India programme crossing new milestones, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Friday.

The value of defence production in FY 2022-23 was Rs 1,08,684 crore.

Welcoming the "encouraging development", Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "Compliments to all those who have contributed to this feat. We are fully committed to nurturing a supportive environment to further enhance our capabilities and establish India as a leading global defence manufacturing hub".

"This will enhance our security apparatus and make us Aatmanirbhar!" he said on X.

Singh said the Government is committed to creating a more conducive regime for developing India as a leading global defence manufacturing hub.

"MoD has achieved the highest-ever growth in indigenous defence production in value terms during financial year (FY) 2023-24, on the back of successful implementation of the policies and initiatives of the Government, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, focussing on achieving 'Aatmanirbharta'," the Ministry said in a statement.

The annual defence production has hit a record high of approximately Rs 1.27 lakh crore in 2023-24, it said.

Indo-Russian joint venture delivers 35,000 AK-203 rifles

NEW DELHI, July 5 (ANI)

AHEAD of Prime Minister Modi's visit to Russia, Indo-Russian Rifles Private Limited (IRRPL), a joint venture between India and Russia, has announced successful delivery of 35,000 AK-203 assault rifles to the Indian Army.

Production has been deployed in India in full compliance with the Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan (Self-Reliant India) programmes. The project includes technology transfer, and its concept includes 100 per cent localisation of AK-203 production. The Indo-Russian Rifles Private Limited joint venture, co-founded by ROSOBORONEXPORT on the Russian side, has completed the first phase of the project to produce AK-203 Kalashnikov assault rifles in India. To increase the degree of localisation, all necessary equip-



ment has been shipped to the Korwa Ordnance Factory in Amethi, Uttar Pradesh, and production facilities are now fully equipped, emphasised Alexander Mikheev, Director General of ROSOBORONEXPORT.

This made it possible to produce and deliver a batch of 35,000 Kalashnikov assault rifles to the Indian Army within the timeframe agreed with the Ministry of Defence of India, he added.

LABOUR PARTY
secures landslide
victory after 14
years, conquers
412 of 650 seats

CONSERVATIVE
Rishi Sunak wins
seat but loses
power, party gets
only 121 seats

■ By Aditi Khanna
LONDON, July 5 (PTI)

KEIR Starmer became UK's new Prime Minister on Friday and vowed to rebuild Britain, hours after his Labour Party secured a landslide victory in a general election in which the weary voters inflicted a "sobering verdict" on Rishi Sunak-led Conservatives, who suffered their worst electoral drubbing.

Starmer, 61, assumed charge as the 58th Prime Minister after his customary audience with King Charles III at Buckingham Palace, following Sunak's meeting with the British monarch.

The Labour Party secured 412 seats in the 650-member House of Commons, up 211 from the last election in 2019. Sunak's Conservatives won just 121 seats, down 250 seats from the previous election. While the Labour had a vote share of 33.7 per cent the Conservatives had 23.7 per cent.

"Our country has voted decisively for change, for national



Britain's Labour Party Prime Minister Keir Starmer and his wife Victoria arrive in Downing Street and greet supporters in London on Friday. (AP/PTI)

renewal and a return of politics for public service," said Starmer in his inaugural address from a lectern outside 10 Downing Street, the official residence of the British Prime Minister.

Citing the need for schools and affordable homes, Starmer vowed to "rebuild" the country's "infrastructure of opportunity", doing so "brick by brick". He vowed a "government of service" and

anyone. We pay tribute to that today and recognise that dedication and hard work he brought to his leadership," he said.

While many of his Cabinet colleagues were defeated in the election held on Thursday, Sunak, the country's first British Indian Prime Minister comfortably held on to his own Richmond and Northallerton seat in northern

(Contd on page 5)

STARMER becomes UK PM



Outgoing Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and his wife Akshata Murty. (AP/PTI)

Read Editorial
CHANGE IN UK
on page 8

spoke of the need for a national "reset".

The incoming Prime Minister also had warm words for his 44-year-old predecessor, Sunak, who he praised for an added accomplishment.

"His achievement as the first British Asian Prime Minister of our country, the extra effort that will have required should not be underestimated by

PM Modi greets Keir Starmer on 'remarkable win'

NEW DELHI, July 5 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Friday congratulated Labour Party leader Keir Starmer on his party's landslide win in the UK general elections and said he looked forward to their positive and constructive collaboration to further strengthen the India-UK comprehensive strategic partnership.

Modi also praised outgoing British Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader Rishi Sunak for his admirable leadership of the United Kingdom and his active contribution to deepen the ties between India and the UK during his term in office. Congratulating Starmer, Modi said, "I look forward to our positive and constructive collaboration to further strengthen the India-UK Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in all areas, fostering mutual growth and prosperity."

Nepal PM Prachanda to face floor test on 12th

KATHMANDU, July 5 (PTI)

NEPAL'S embattled Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', who lost support from two major alliance partners earlier this week, is set to seek a vote of confidence from the House of Representatives on July 12, it was announced on Thursday.

The Prime Minister sent a letter to the Parliament Secretariat asking the latter to make arrangements for the vote. Dahal chose to go for the floor test after the coalition Government withdrew its support, and PM have to table a motion in the House of Representatives for a vote of confidence within 30 days," "The Kathmandu Post' reported.

Earlier, Prachanda had announced that he would not quit after the resignation of eight Cabinet ministers belonging to the largest party and instead face a vote of confidence in Parliament. His announcement was prompted after Nepali Congress (NC) President Sher Bahadur Deuba and Communist Party of Nepal- Unified Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML) chairman KP Sharma Oli, both former premiers, inked a power-sharing deal on Monday night to form a new NC-UML alliance Government.

The Nepali Congress, which is largest party in the 275-member House of Representatives, has 89 seats, while CPN-UML has 78 seats. Prachanda's party, the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist Centre (CPN-MC), has 32 seats.

Assam floods: 24L hit as deluge continues for 4th day, 4.6L in camps

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Guwahati: Assam's flood situation remained critical for the fourth day in a row on Friday, with the number of affected people rising to over 24 lakh. Dhubri district has been hit particularly hard, with more than seven lakh people bearing the brunt of the deluge.

Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, which is currently grappling with the devastating effects of the ongoing deluge, has reported the deaths of 77 animals, up from 31 on Thursday. The casualties include three rhinos, 62 hog deer, and an otter, which drowned in the floodwaters within the park. In addition to the animals that perished due to drowning, 11 more succumbed during treatment.

No human fatality was directly linked to the floods on

Friday, but a landslide claimed the lives of a mother and her son in Guwahati as they slept in the early hours of Friday. Additionally, an eight-year-old child was reported missing after falling into a flooded drain in Guwahati, a city struck by flash floods following the heaviest rainfall of the year in the past 24 hours.

The first two waves of the deluge since May 16 have wreaked havoc, leaving a trail of destruction and sorrow in their wake. Till Thursday, the devastating floods that have struck this year have claimed the lives of 52 persons.

Across the 30 districts impacted by the disaster, more than 4.65 lakh people have been forced to leave their homes and are currently in relief camps, according to the Assam State Disaster Management Authority's (ASDMA) report on Friday.