

RAKSHA MANTRI VISITS KINGDOM OF THAILAND

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Ministry of Defence

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Raksha Mantri Smt Nirmala Sitharaman is on an official bilateral visit to the Kingdom of Thailand from 27 to 28 August 2018. Raksha Mantri held bilateral talks with Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister of Thailand His Excellency Gen. Prawit Wongsuwon in Bangkok, today. She also called on Prime Minister of Thailand His Excellency Gen. Prayuth Chan-o-cha.

During the meetings, both sides discussed a gamut of issues relating to defence cooperation between India and Thailand. The Ministers welcomed the positive momentum and substantive content of ongoing bilateral defence engagement and discussed measures to further enhance and deepen defence cooperation between India and Thailand.

It was decided to step up military-to-military engagement by commencing bilateral navy exercises. In addition, both countries will explore enhancement of ongoing joint exercises, the MAITREE counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism Army Exercise as well as their SIAM BHARAT Air Force exercise. Both sides would also expand cooperation on maritime security, focussing on greater sharing of information to develop Maritime Domain Awareness. Raksha Mantri offered additional training opportunities for the Royal Thai Army in India, including through tailor made courses in specialised areas, which was welcomed by Thailand.

The Ministers also discussed stepping up defence industry and R&D cooperation. The two sides identified specific areas for such engagement and would discuss this further through institutionalised dialogue mechanisms.

Raksha Mantri and the Thai leadership also discussed regional security developments. Both sides noted complementarities in their approaches to the Indo-Pacific region and decided to hold regular consultations on issues of mutual interest.

Raksha Mantri welcomed Thailand's forthcoming Chairmanship of ASEAN and as the ASEAN country coordinator for India, which would create additional pathways for engagement between India and Thailand, including under the ADMM Plus framework. In this context, the Defence Minister of Thailand welcomed India's initiative to host the inaugural BIMSTEC Army Exercise and Conclave of Chiefs in India in September 2018 and confirmed Thailand's participation.

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