

# RAKSHA MANTRI CALLS ON UK PRIME MINISTER IN LONDON

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Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh called on the Prime Minister of United Kingdom Mr Rishi Sunak at 10 Downing Street, London on January 10, 2024. The meeting was warm and cordial. The Raksha Mantri highlighted that both nations have made significant strides in moulding and recrafting the historic ties into a modern, multifaceted and mutually beneficial partnership, under the direction of the leaders of both the countries.

Shri Rajnath Singh recalled the recent enhancement in bilateral defence engagement, spanning joint exercises, training, capability building, increased interoperability, military-to-military ties especially in the maritime domain. He emphasised the ongoing efforts to enhance defence industrial cooperation, including in the technology domain. He briefed Mr Rishi Sunak about his positive interactions with the UK defence industry and the new positive energy in the bilateral defence relationship.

The Raksha Mantri stated that the UK and other like-minded countries should work with India for strengthening a peaceful and stable global rules-based order, including through partnering India in its inexorable rise, which can be strengthened, reinforced and speeded up with friendly collaboration.

Shri Rajnath Singh further stated that Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi is leading the quest of 1.4 billion Indians towards the national objective of becoming a developed country by mid-21<sup>st</sup> century. Prime Minister Modi's efforts have borne remarkable fruits, growth is sustainably on the upswing, poverty has been reduced drastically, and a business friendly architecture has been put in place. At the international level, the Government of India is ready to partner with friends like the UK to strengthen the rule-based world order.

Prime Minister Sunak fully agreed with the Raksha Mantri on the need for UK and India to work in the domains of trade, defence and technology. In particular, he expressed hope that the ongoing Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations could be brought to a successful conclusion soon. He also underlined his keenness, and that of his Government, to strengthen the defence and security pillar of the bilateral relationship, including through Government backing for stronger business and technology partnerships with Indian counterpart entities.

Shri Rajnath Singh gifted a Ram Darbar statue to the UK PM during the meeting, which was also attended by UK NSA Sir Tim Barrow.

The Raksha Mantri also met with the UK's Foreign Minister Lord David Cameron at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. The Ministers appreciated the new momentum and direction of the India-UK partnership, symbolised by intense engagements at various levels.

Shri Rajnath Singh outlined his goal of integrating defence industries of both countries including through supply chain integration to build resilience. He also emphasised the importance of bilateral start-up level interaction, and identification and discussion of joint projects which India and UK could implement together.

Foreign Secretary Cameron reiterated the UK government's desire to collaborate with India in the defence areas, particularly in the field of defence industrial collaboration, as one of the

means by which the UK hopes to strengthen the support for a rule-based international order.

Later, the Raksha Mantri interacted with the Indian community at India House, London. Over 160 prominent persons of Indian origin attended the interaction. A number of Indian military ex-servicemen, including few family members of World War II veterans were also present.

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## **ABB/Savvy**

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