

AT DEFEXPO, INDIA TO PITCH MILITARY TOOLS TO AFRICA, IOR COUNTRIES

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India has undertaken a transformative journey from being the largest defence importer to an exporter, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Monday at the curtain raiser event of the 12th edition of DefExpo in Gandhinagar.

Two major conclaves, the second edition of both the India-Africa Defence Dialogue (IADD) and the Indian Ocean Region (IOR)-plus conclave will see India pitching its military hardware to various countries.

“The IADD and IOR+ Conclave will be two very important events for promoting peace, security, prosperity and defence cooperation throughout the region and establishing new defence and industrial partnerships,” Mr. Singh said. At the third day of the defence exhibition on October 20, 451 partnerships in terms of Memorandum of Understandings (MoU), Transfer of Technology agreements and product launches are expected compared with 210 at the last DefExpo, said Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar.

Stating that India and Africa have been close friends and partners, Mr. Kumar said to take this forward, the two sides have been conducting a dialogue. This, he said, includes companies discussing with them, capacity building, and participation in tackling maritime threats like piracy and drug trafficking.

The Centre has set an ambitious target to achieve a manufacturing turnover of \$25 billion, or Rs. 1,75,000 crore, including exports of \$5 bn in aerospace and defence goods and services by 2025. The government has announced a series of measures in this direction.

The country’s defence exports which have been growing year on year in the past few years touched Rs. 13,000 crore for 2021-22. For this financial year, they have reached Rs. 8,000 crore, Mr. Singh said.

Achal Malhotra, Director, Defence Exhibition Organisation in the Department of Defence Production, said 75 countries will be participating in DefExpo. Over 53 African countries have been invited for IADD to be held on October 18 and 44 for the IOR+ conclave on October 19. This edition has the largest participation and is spread over 1 lakh square metres with 75 countries, 33 Foreign Ministers, 1,340 companies and 10 State pavilions, Mr. Malhotra said.

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