

Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh's press statement at media interaction in Moscow

Following is the text of statement issued to press by Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh in Moscow on June 23, 2020:

I am in Moscow at the invitation of the Russian Ministry of Defence to attend the 75th Anniversary of Victory Day Parade which is a most auspicious occasion for Russia and the whole world. As we remember and pay tribute to the immense sacrifice of the Russian people for victory in the Second World War. Indian soldiers participated in the war effort in the millions and suffered immense casualties. Many of them were part of the war efforts to provide assistance to the Soviet Army. Therefore, it is a great honor that an Indian Military contingent will be marching in the Red Square tomorrow. This is a sign of everlasting friendship between the armed forces of both our countries.

My visit to Moscow is the first foreign visit from India of an official delegation after the COVID pandemic. This is a sign of our special friendship. Despite all the difficulties of the pandemic, our bilateral relations are keeping good contacts at the various levels. We look forward to the visit of His Excellency President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin to India at the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, later this year.

India-Russia relations are one of Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership. Our defence relationship is one of its important pillars. I had an opportunity to review our defence relationship with Deputy Prime Minister Yury Borisov and I thank him for the honour for visiting me in this hotel, despite the restrictions of the pandemic. My discussions were very positive and productive. I have been assured that ongoing contracts will be maintained and not just maintained, in a number of cases will be taken forward in a shorter time. All our proposals have received positive response from the Russian side. I am fully satisfied with my discussions. Earlier this morning, Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar had discussions with his counterpart Deputy Defence Minister Fomin. I can say with confidence that the traditional friendship between India & Russia remain strong. Our mutual interests are solid and we look to future cooperation in the spirit of our special friendship.

I look forward to participating in the 75th Victory Parade tomorrow. I convey my greetings to the friendly people of Russia, specially the veterans, who have contributed so much to our common security.