



Rajnath keeps date with Siachen, calls soldiers 'protecting deities'

After missing his scheduled Holi visit to Siachen due to adverse weather conditions, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh fulfilled his promise this week and visited the world's highest snow-clad battlefield on Monday.

He carried out an on-the-ground review of the security situation there, and addressed soldiers at a forward post at an altitude of 15,100 ft, asserting that Siachen was India's capital of "courage, grit and determination" and termed the soldiers deployed there "no less than any protecting deity."

Singh lauded the "iron-clad" will of the Indian Army soldiers deployed in the icy cold glacier and said that their bravery will forever be an inspiration for future generations.

The defence minister described Siachen as a symbol of India's sovereignty and determination.

He said that just as Delhi is India's national capital, Mumbai is the financial capital and Bengaluru is the technology capital, Siachen is the "capital of courage, grit and determination."

The Siachen glacier in the Karakoram range is known as the highest militarised zone in the world where the soldiers have to battle

frostbite and high winds.

Singh's visit to Siachen came over a week after the Indian Army marked the 40th year of its presence in the strategically key region following the 'Operation Meghdoot'.

The defence minister described the operation, which was launched by the Indian Army in Siachen on April 13, 1984, as a golden chapter of the country's military history.

"The success of Operation Meghdoot is a matter of pride for all of us," he said.

The defence minister was accompanied by Chief of the Army Staff Gen Manoj Pande; General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Northern Command Lt Gen MV Suchindra Kumar and General Officer Commanding of 14 Corps Lt Gen Rashim Bali.

In his remarks, Singh lauded the soldiers for walking on the virtuous path of protecting the motherland with valour and determination in extreme conditions.

"We are leading a peaceful life as we have an assurance that our brave soldiers stand steadfast at the borders," he said.

Singh said that the first lamp on Diwali and the "first colour" of Holi should be dedicated to the protectors of the country, similar to the

first food offering to deities, priests and gurus.

"Our soldier is no less than any protecting deity," he said.

"In the times to come, when the history of national security is written, the acts of bravery and iron-clad will of our soldiers in the icy cold glacier will be remembered with pride. It will forever be an inspiration for future generations," he said.

After carrying out aerial reconnaissance, the defence minister landed at the forward post and was given a detailed brief on the operational readiness in the Siachen Glacier and the prevalent security situation.

He also discussed the aspects associated with the operational challenges with the commanders on the ground.

"Visited a forward post in Siachen. Had a wonderful interaction with the brave Army personnel who are guarding our nation in extremely challenging conditions," Singh said on 'X'.

"I laud their courage and professionalism, in the line of duty," he said.

The defence minister also laid a wreath at the Siachen War Memorial as a mark of tribute to the fallen heroes who made the supreme sacri-



face in service of the nation.

Singh had visited Leh on March 24 and celebrated Holi with the troops. He was scheduled to visit Siachen, but it was postponed due to adverse weather conditions.

From Leh, the defence minister had spoken with the soldiers posted in Siachen over phone and told them that he would soon visit the world's highest battlefield and interact with them.

Singh fulfilled his promise with

Monday's visit despite his busy schedule, the ministry said in a statement.

The Indian Army has been strengthening its presence in Siachen over the last few years.

In January last year, Captain Shiva Chauhan from the Army's Corps of Engineers was posted at a frontline post in Siachen Glacier, in the first such operational deployment of a woman Army officer at the key battlefield.

REC approves Rs 1869 Cr loan for Kiru Hydro Electric Project

REC Limited, a Maharatna public sector company and a leading NBFC, has signed an agreement with Chenab Valley Power Project Private Limited (CVPPPL) for providing a term loan of Rs 1,869.26 crore.

The loan will be utilised for the development, construction and operation of the greenfield Kiru Hydro Electric Project

(4×156 MW) on Chenab river located in Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir.

Kiru Hydro Electric Project (624 MW), is a run-of-river scheme proposed on Chenab and is about 42 km from Kishtwar. The project envisages the construction of a 135-metre-high dam and an underground powerhouse with 4 units of 156 MW each. The agreement was signed in

the presence of CVPPPL Managing Director Ramesh Mukhiya, and Deputy General Manager Rishabh Jain from REC Limited.

CVPPPL is a Joint Venture Company between NHPC (51 per cent) and JKSPDC (49 per cent) formed at the initiative of the Jammu and Kashmir government and the Central government to harness the

vast hydro potential of Chenab river.

The company was incorporated in 2011. CVPPPL has been entrusted with the construction of Kiru HE Project (624 MW), Pakal Dul HE Project (1,000 MW), Kwar HE Project (540 MW), & Kirthai-II HE Project (930 MW) on Build, Own, Operate and Maintain (BOOM) basis with an aggregate installed capacity of 3,094 MW.