

**Press Information Bureau  
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**India and Kazakhstan agree to boost Defence and Military Technical Cooperation**

Raksha Mantri Smt Nirmala Sitharaman was on a three-day visit to Astana, Kazakhstan from October 02, 2018 at the invitation of Minister of Defence of the Republic of Kazakhstan Mr. Nurlan Yermekbayev. During the visit, she met her Kazakh counterpart and Minister of Defence and Aerospace Industry Mr. Beibut Atamkulov. They discussed a wide range of issues relating to defence and military technical cooperation and took stock of the progress that this bilateral relationship has made since the renewal of the MoU on defence cooperation in January 2017. She inspected a Tri-Services Guard of Honour at the Ministry of Defence and also visited the National Defence University where she was shown the Indian Military Art Room (IMAR), which has been established with Indian assistance.

India and Kazakhstan Defence Cooperation includes military-technical cooperation, military education and training, joint military exercises, bilateral exchange of visits and cadet youth exchange programs. Over 200 Kazakh Defence Forces Personnel have undergone military training in India till date. Both countries successfully conducted a company level joint military exercise 'KAZIND-2018' in South Kazakhstan, last month. India and Kazakhstan are bound by historical and cultural ties and this has laid a strong foundation for the multifaceted cooperation. Both countries are Strategic Partners since 2009.

Raksha Mantri Smt Nirmala Sitharaman and Minister of Defence Mr. Nurlan Yermekbayev presided over the flag off ceremony of the Kazakhstan contingent that will join the Indian contingent at United Nations International Peacekeeping Force in Lebanon. India's partnership with Kazakhstan in UN Peacekeeping reflects its desire to support Kazakhstan in its contribution to global peace. The contingents of both countries worked together over the past one year to prepare for this joint deployment. The Kazakh contingent will join the Indian Contingent at Lebanon by the end of this month.

Smt Nirmala Sitharaman also discussed issues relating to defence production with the Minister for Defence and Aerospace Industry. In this connection, the possibilities of joint production and/or co-production were discussed based upon the relative

strengths and experience of both sides. She also discussed regional developments with the Kazakhstan Foreign Minister Mr. Kairat Abdrakhmanov. The Kazakhstan FM appreciated India's position and experience as a major force in UN Peace Keeping and contributor peace building in various parts of the world under the UN mandate.

Raksha Mantri Smt Nirmala Sitharaman invited the Minister of Defence, Mr. Nurlan Yermekbayev and Minister of Defence and Aerospace Industry, Mr Beibut Atamkulov to visit India and to attend Aero India 2019 to be held in Bengaluru in February 2019. The invitations were well received.

**SRR/Nampi/DK/Rajib**



