

## **Israeli Navy Chief holds talks with top Indian defence officials**

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**New Delhi:** Israeli Navy Chief Vice Admiral Ram Rutberg today held talks with top Indian defence officials here as the two countries look at deepening the bilateral defence ties.

Rutberg met his Indian counterpart Admiral R K Dhowan at his South Block office here and later called on Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar and Defence Secretary G Mohan Kumar.

The visit comes at a time when the long-range surface-to- air missile Barak 8 is undergoing trials in Israel. The project is being carried out by India and Israel jointly.

"We are looking forward to the trials to be completed successfully so that the missile is available for both Indian and Israeli navies," Dhowan told reporters here this morning.

Rutberg said, "The road map ahead is joint collaboration in developing defence technology.

"Together we can achieve much more than doing it alone. This is the aim...to work together. This is the best way and this is the only way we know," he said.

Israel has been a key defence partner for India. From radars to missiles, India has been depending on Israel as it undertakes a modernisation drive of the armed forces.

Asked how Israel sees a possible visit by Prime Minister Narendra Modi later this year, Rutberg said, "Any Indian visiting Israel is Prime Minister. We welcome him, salute him and we appreciate him."

On his part, Dhowan said that a visit by Modi will make the links between the two navies stronger.

In a bid to bolster defence ties between the two countries, frontline warship of Indian Navy â€” INS Trikand -- made a port call on August 19 at Haifa in Israel.

The previous port call at Haifa by an Indian Navy warship was in 2012.

To a question on the 'One Rank One Pension' issue, Dhowan said it is "being examined with all seriousness and on priority by the government".

- PTI