

20 Oct 2020: PIB Summary & Analysis

1. DRDO Procurement Manual 2020

Context:

Defence Minister releases DRDO Procurement Manual 2020 (PM-2020).

Details:

- The new DRDO Procurement Manual is expected to facilitate the indigenous defence industry by simplifying the processes and ensuring their participation in design and development activities.
- The PM-2020 will facilitate faster execution of R&D projects/programmes.
- **Some salient features of PM-2020:**
 - Bid security declaration option for earnest money deposit
 - Increase of threshold limit for advance payment
 - Placement of order on lowest bidder 2 (L2) in case L1 backs out
 - Exemption of bid security and performance security up to Rs 10 lakh
 - No negotiations for commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) items/services wherever price discovery is happening through market forces
 - Liquidated damage (LD) rate for development contracts has been reduced
 - The delivery period (DP) extension process has been simplified
- The above features should assist the industry for the speedy execution of projects.
- Additionally, performance security for service contracts is linked to the payment cycle instead of the total contract value.
- Procurement of stores from development partners, safeguarding of free issue material through insurance cover instead of bank guarantee (BG) are other facilitating measures adopted to help the industry.
- Many of the internal procedures have been further simplified for faster engagement with industry.
- The last time the procurement manual for DRDO was modified was in 2016.

2. National Deworming Day

Context:

14 states report a reduction in worm prevalence; 9 show a substantial reduction.

Background:

- Soil-Transmitted Helminthiasis (STH), also known as parasitic intestinal worm infection, is a significant public health concern mostly in low resource settings.
- These are known to have detrimental effects on children's physical growth and well-being and can cause anaemia and under-nutrition.
- Regular deworming as advised by the [World Health Organization](https://www.who.int/) eliminates worm infestation among children and adolescents living in areas with high STH burden, thereby contributing to achieving better nutrition and health.
- As per a WHO Report on STH published in 2012, in India, there were an estimated 64% of children in the age group (1-14 years) at risk of STH.

- The risk was estimated based on the hygiene and sanitation practices and limited STH prevalence data at that point of time.
- To assess the exact burden of STH in India, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare appointed the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) as the nodal agency to coordinate and conduct nationwide baseline STH mapping.
- In collaboration with partners and government agencies, NCDC completed the baseline STH mapping across the country by the end of 2016.
- The data showed varied prevalence ranging from 12.5 % in Madhya Pradesh to 85% in Tamil Nadu.

National Deworming Day (NDD):

- NDD is a flagship programme of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and was launched in 2015.
- It is implemented as a biannual single day programme implemented through the platforms of schools and anganwadis.
- Albendazole tablet, approved by WHO, is used for the treatment of intestinal worms in children and adolescents as part of Mass Drug Administration (MDA) programmes globally.
- The NDD programme is implemented by the Health Ministry in collaboration with the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Education and technical assistance from WHO and the technical partners.

Impact of NDD:

- To evaluate the impact of the consistently implemented high coverage NDD programme, the Health Ministry recently initiated follow-up prevalence surveys led by NCDC and partners.
- They were guided by the High Level Scientific Committee (HLSC) appointed by the Ministry.
- As on date, the follow-up surveys are completed in 14 states.
- All 14 states have shown a reduction in the follow-up survey compared to the baseline prevalence survey and the states of Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Telangana, Tripura, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar have shown a substantial reduction in worm prevalence in the STH follow up prevalence survey.

3. India International Science Festival

Context:

The 6th India International Science Festival (IISF) to be held in a virtual format in December 2020.

About IISF:

- IISF is an annual event organised jointly by science & technology-related Ministries and Departments of the Government of India and Vijnana Bharati (Vibha).
- IISF is a festival to celebrate the achievements of India's scientific and technological advancements with students, innovators, craftsmen, farmers, scientists and technocrats from India and abroad.
- The aim is to engage the public with science and celebrate the joy of science and show the ways how science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) provide us with the solutions to improve our lives.

4. Indigenous software solution for vessel traffic services

Context:

Minister of State for Shipping launches indigenous software solutions Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) and Vessels Traffic Monitoring Systems (VTMS).

About the solutions:

- VTS and VTMS is a software which determines vessel positions, position of other traffic or meteorological hazard warnings and extensive management of traffic within a port or waterway.
- Vessel Traffic Services (VTS) contribute to the safety of life at sea, safety and efficiency of navigation and protection of the marine environment, adjacent shore areas, worksites and offshore installations from possible adverse effects of maritime traffic.
- Vessels Traffic Management Systems are installed in some of the busiest waters in the world, and are making a valuable contribution to safer navigation, more efficient traffic flow, and protection of the environment.
- Traffic flow in busy approach routes, access channels, and harbours can be coordinated safely, in the best interest of port and its users.
- Incidents and emergency situations can be dealt with quickly.
- Data from traffic movements can be stored and used as reference information for port administration, port authorities, coastguards and search and rescue services.
- VTMS is mandatory under the [IMO](#) Convention SOLAS (Safety of Life at Sea).
- The VTMS traffic image is compiled and collected by means of advanced sensors such as radar, AIS, direction finding, CCTV and VHF or other co-operative systems and services.
- A modern VTMS integrates all of the information into a single operator working environment for ease of use and in order to allow for effective traffic organization and communication.
- Presently, India has approximately 15 VTS systems operational along the Indian Coast and there is no uniformity of VTS software as each system has its own VTS software.
- Development of the indigenous VTS software will reduce the expenditure of foreign exchange on this issue and also minimize the dependence on foreign support for VTS software. **Accordingly, indigenous development of VTS software will benefit with respect to:**
 - Saving of foreign exchange for various VTSs in India.
 - VTS Software can be provided to Indian trade-friendly nations viz. Maldives, Mauritius, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Bangladesh and Gulf countries.
 - Will also minimize the cost for future upgradations of software.
 - Shall be easier to interconnect with MIS/ERP software of ports.
 - The availability of Indian VTS software shall make Indian companies competitive commercially in global bids.

