

## AIR Spotlight: Make in India for Defence Sector

AIR Spotlight is an insightful program featured daily on the All India Radio Newsonair. In this program, many eminent panellists discuss issues of importance which can be quite helpful in [IAS exam](#) preparation. This article features discussion on Make in India for Defence Sector.

### **Participants:**

1. Major General Ashok Kumar, Security Analyst
2. Dinakar Peri, Journalist

### **Introduction:**

- After independence when the journey of National growth started India made a huge success in terms of its economic agenda. This was because of the focus given to the manufacturing sector.
- Defence sector also registered progress but it was not in accordance with the needs and potential of India.

### **Measures taken for Defence Sector:**

- In 2014, the Make in India Mission was launched.
  - Under it, concessions were made and the rules were simplified for indigenous production.
  - The mission also invited foreign vendors and manufacturers to make their products in India.
- The single window clearance process was approved.
- The [Make in India mission](#) was complemented by the Skill India Mission. This helped in addressing the requirement of skilled manpower for the manufacturing work.
- The government of India launched the [Atmanirbhar Bharat](#) in 2020 to tackle the issue of large imports in the defence sector.
- Moreover to solve the problem of imports various Negative lists were released, which prohibited imports in particular segments.
- The government also opened the manufacturing of various equipment for private entities as well.
- There is also a push by the government for the startup ecosystem in the field of defence manufacturing.
- The Government has also eased various restrictions and gives financial assistance to the Research and Development in the field of Defence.
- One significant step in this regard is the Emergency procurement platform of up to 300 Crore rupees which considerably helps in long-standing deals. This was of great help during the two critical situations of the Balakot strike and the Ladakh standoff.

### **Consequences of the measures:**

- A considerable dent was made in the quantum of imports in the defence sector.
- India also exported close to thirteen thousand crores of equipment to other countries. It was considerably benefitted by the export of BrahMos to the Philippines. This added value and took our defence industry to next level.
- It also helped in meeting the requirements of our own armed forces.

### **Challenges in the Defence Procurement and Manufacturing:**

- India is the third largest importer of defence equipment in the world.
- There is still a reliance on imports for heavy systems, big platforms, and advanced technologies.
- Multiple layers of restrictive regimes complicate the entire process and are counterproductive in the procurement of defence equipment.
- In the case of procurement at various levels, like Army headquarters, Command Headquarters, or Service Headquarters each has its own Standard Operating Procedures(SOP) that make the entire process much more complicated.
- The small and medium vendors that have a technological edge are often negated due to financial constraints and not given their due importance often resulting in discouraging them.
- Emergency Procurement procedures are still quite restrictive in the smooth functioning of the operational needs of the defence sector.

### **Measure Ahead:**

- The fundamental change that is required is that the Government should ensure that all the procurement is done within the General Financial Rules of 2017 and not as per the SOP at various hierarchical levels of the Defence Sector. Even if it is done then it should be under specific guidelines rather than restrictive rules.
- Going forward diplomatic relations with the countries in the Indo pacific and the west Asian countries can be strengthened. This can also be used to increase our exports to these countries.

### **Conclusion:**

A range of measures have been taken to strengthen our Defence manufacturing and liberalize our exports, but a lot still needs to be taken care of while going forward to become a Defence superpower in the world.