

Defence Budget 2019-20 :-

- On February 1, 2019, interim budget was announced in the parliament. As the nation was already swaying between jingoism and nationalism, the same can be said for the 8.1% hike in the defence budget.
- Rs. 4,31,011 crores were announced for the Ministry of Defence (MoD) out of which Rs. 3,01,866 crores form the conventional defence budget. This conventional amount will be allotted to Army, Navy, Air Force and DRDO.
- The army takes the lion's share i.e. 56% of the defence budget. Airforce gets 23%, Navy gets 15% and the DRDO gets 6% of the budget.
- Of the total defence budget, share of revenue expenditures (salaries and pensions) is 66%. The rest is for capital expenditure (modernization).
- Army's capital expenditure will be the least when compared to the other two in terms of percentage. Though we have the second largest army in the world, it still is not an excuse for spending less on modernization. China was having the same problem but it quickly restructured the organization, shredded some manpower. This helped them in increasing their manoeuvrability and spending more on latest technologies.
- Though Gen. Bipin Rawat came up with effective and modern restructuring plans to ensure money comes towards modernization, but since the budget has already been allocated, we might not see the restructuring happening this year.
- Navy and Airforce will be spending almost 11% and 10% respectively on modernization from their shares. We are already short of squadrons in the IAF and most of the existing planes and AWACS system belong to the previous century. Same is the case with Navy, with China exponentially expanding its naval power, India will have to put more efforts.
- The government did come up with Make in India and also tried to incentivise the start-up industry through Startup India and defence sector was not excluded from it (Department of Defence Production initiated the Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX)). But we haven't seen any significant results from the former and lack of investment hampers the latter.
- The involvement of new and private players will boost the competition and quality of the indigenously developed defence products and will also reduce the quality of procurement. This in the truest sense will embark the success of Make in India.
- We expect groundbreaking results from the DRDO, but we provide them with only 6% of the total defence budget to look after its men and to come up with new innovations too, which is pretty unfair. DRDO's share needs to be increased.

Conclusion :-

The government still sees the armed forces as a manpower-intensive force. This needs to be changed. The technology is changing now faster than ever, and we need to be prepared to tackle any adversary in any form that may come at us. This can only be done when the highly skilled men of our armed forces are provided with the best and latest equipment.

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