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DEFENCE BUDGET



MAKE IN INDIA



THE FIRST CHOICE IN THE DOMAINS OF
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STRATEGIC
SAGA





MISSION

We endeavour to sound **ALERTS** and create **AWARENESS** about the myriad dimensions and manifestations of **DEFENCE** and **SECURITY** in India and around the world.



The power of a King lies in his mighty arms...

Security of the citizens at peace time is very important because State is the only saviour of the men and women who get affected only because of the negligence of the State.

- Chanakya

DSA IS AS MUCH YOURS, AS IT IS OURS!



India's budgeting exercise is a complex process involving a myriad of departments and ministries, spreading across a spectrum that includes archaeology and space. There could be any number of other sundry recipients in between, but none generates the annual inquisitiveness as does the budget of the Ministry of Defence. From the budget delivery speech which invariably declares that this is the best that has ever been done for the country, and then the squibbing commentaries which will inevitably slam the allocations as insufficient and improper. There will also be the political comments which dissect the budgetary allocations subjectively.

Being partisan is an essential part of the political process, and the defence budget is its annual competitive moment. Which essentially means that the statements emanating from both sides of the political spectrum will be designed to suit the partisan positions that are adopted owing to the nature of Indian politics. Bipartisanship is rare, and rarer

even in matters of national security. So slamming budgetary allocations is par for the course, even if the amounts announced are adequate and impressive. And when they are insufficient, as they tend to be in periods of economic stress, then its free for all.

This free for all doesn't do justice to the intense dynamics behind the preparation of India's defence budget. Even as the various departments lobby for an enhanced share of the budget pie, the defence ministry has an even more complex process, for it involves the three services with their varied visions for modernisation and threat perceptions. After all, any capital acquisition has to be based on a thorough analysis of what constitutes India's current national security scenario, and what will be the looming medium and long term threats. These studies should form the bedrock of India's allocations for national security.

The defence budget allocations should, therefore, not be an exercise that exists in isolation from the larger security environment which

involves the entire gamut of players in India. Given the example set by the breakdown in Manipur it is easy to say that the players involved in India's security set up range from the local state police forces all the way up to North and South Block in New Delhi. The allocations, therefore, should keep in mind the complexities as thrown up by the various analyses that emanate from the threat perception scenarios these institutions produce. But they must.

Which then becomes a crucial point to note that each institution must periodically generate threat perception scenarios that form a readable report which can then be studied as part of a larger process. It is that larger process which should then be responsible for producing India's defence budget, not an isolated departmental or institutional lobbying effort. The current process involves months of to and fro between the three services, financial section in MoD, and Finance Ministry. The services invariably ask for the maximum, which gets whittled down by civilian pens, as a result none are satisfied by the allocations, annually.

Manvendra Singh



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DEFENCE BUDGET: INDIA'S WAY FORWARD FROM 2024



The Defence Budget, recently approved in Parliament, outlines the financial allocations for the defence sector in the upcoming fiscal year. It has generated discussions both within and outside the defence community. The budget encompasses a wide range of provisions for the defence apparatus and its unique features have garnered attention. This year the Defence Budget is quite distinct in terms of the gamut covered by the government as following:

- 1. Deep Tech Focus:** A new scheme is introduced to boost deep tech capabilities in the defense sector, signaling a commitment to technological advancements for national security.
- 2. Modest Increase:** The Defence Budget sees a moderate rise, allocating Rs 6.2 lakh crores to cover salaries, weapons procurement, and pensions for the armed forces.
- 3. Promotion of Atma Nirbharta:** The government aims to expedite self-reliance in defence by encouraging public and private investment in post-harvesting agriculture activities.

Amidst geopolitical tensions worldwide and India's strategic imperatives, the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has prompted a re-evaluation of military planning and budgeting. The Defence sector, facing heightened border tensions with China and Pakistan, underscores the urgency for prioritising modernisation and self-reliance in arms production, aligning with the 'Make in India' initiative.

The Defence Budget's historical allocation, though falling short of the recommended benchmark of 3% of GDP, is expected to witness minor adjustments in the upcoming fiscal year. Existing procurement plans, including significant initiatives like the second indigenous aircraft carrier and the acquisition of Tejas Mark-1A aircraft, are likely to continue.

Despite rhetoric on Atma Nirbharta (self-reliance) and 'Make in India,' the reality includes a mix of domestic production and imports. The Defence Budget must navigate this complexity, addressing real and growing threats from China and Pakistan, both geopolitically and conventionally. China's infrastructure advancements near border areas heightens concerns. Technological gaps, especially in areas such as hypersonic missiles, UAVs, and electromagnetic weapons, need attention. The imperative for swarm drone combat capability, futuristic drones, and e-warfare systems is highlighted, with a call for urgent developments in Future Infantry Combat Vehicles (FICVs).

In the dynamic landscape of global geopolitics, the symbiotic relationship between military strategies and economic interests necessitates a nuanced adaptation of the Defence Budget. As nations increasingly intertwine their military prowess with economic imperatives, the Defence Budget becomes a critical instrument for ensuring not only security but also strategic agility.

The latest this edition meticulously delves into vital aspects, unravelling the multifaceted challenges and opportunities that shape India's defence position in the intricate global theatre. It offers an in-depth exploration beyond the surface, providing readers with a comprehensive understanding of the intricacies influencing India's defence and security priorities in 2024.

In this edition, the DSA champions crucial initiatives to fortify India's defence landscape. Firstly, it emphasises the imperative of integrating defence education, urging for its inclusion from middle-level schools to establish a solid foundation in understanding defence-related matters. Additionally, it proposes the implementation of a Defence Awareness Program, designed to bridge the gap between the armed forces and the general populace, fostering increased understanding and support. Furthermore, it advocates for special budgetary provisions tailored to address the unique needs and challenges of female defence personnel, promoting gender inclusivity and recognizing their indispensable contributions within the defence sector. These three initiatives collectively aim to bolster the nation's defence preparedness, knowledge dissemination, and inclusivity in the evolving landscape of 2024.

I am sure that this edition will very well address on the importance of Defence Budget and its effective implications for the National Security of Bharat in the coming weeks and months ahead.

JAI HIND!

Pawan Agrawal
Chief Executive Officer



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