

NEWS TODAY

INDIA'S DEFENCE EXPORT REACHES AN ALL-TIME HIGH OF APPROX. RS 16,000 CRORE IN FINANCIAL YEAR 2022-23

India has achieved a remarkable milestone of over **10-times increase in defence exports since 2016-17**.

➤ India has a target of **US \$5 billion for defence exports by 2024-25**.

Some of the major initiatives are:

➤ **Formulation of a Defence Export Strategy and constitution of a Defence Export Steering Committee (DESC) and Export Promotion Cell (EPC).**

➤ A **negative list of countries for defence export** by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

➤ **End-to-end online export authorisation** curtailing delays and bringing Ease of Doing Business.

➤ Criterion for **Indigenous Content (IC) in Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP)**.

➤ Allowing the **government to fund up to 70% of development costs**.

➤ Increasing **foreign direct investment (FDI) to 74%** through the automatic route.

➤ Notification of **three Open General Export License (OGEL)**, a one-time export license to export specified items to specified destinations.

Significance of defence export

➤ Making Indian defence Industry **part of the global defence value chain**.

➤ **Increasing domestic manufacturing capacity**.

➤ Encouraging the use of new technology.

➤ **Enhancing the "Make in India"** in the defence industry.

STATUS OF DEFENCE EXPORTS

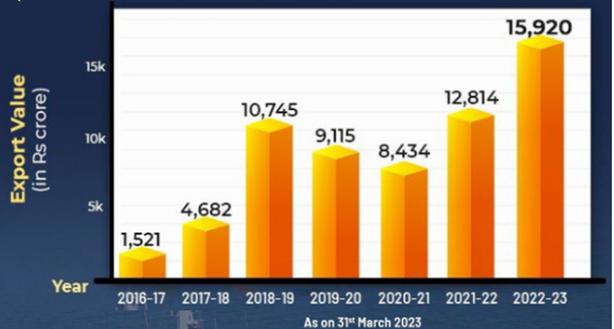
India is now exporting to over **85 countries**.

100 firms exporting defence products at present.

The top 3 export destinations are: Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Armenia.

INDIAN DEFENCE EXPORTS ALL TIME HIGH!

Rise in Defence Exports by more than **10 times**



INDIA CELEBRATES 50 SUCCESSFUL YEARS OF "PROJECT TIGER"

Project Tiger was launched in the year **1973** to protect Tigers in India.

➤ It is a **centrally Sponsored Scheme** of the **Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** providing central assistance to the tiger States for tiger conservation in designated tiger reserves.

➤ It was launched in the **backdrop of a declining population of tigers**, which had fallen below 2000 in the 1970s.

➤ **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)** is its implementing authority established in 2005 under **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**.

▪ It has **overarching supervisory/coordination role and approves the Tiger Conservation Plan** prepared by the State Governments.

▪ **NTCA consists of the Minister in charge of the MoEFCC (as Chairperson)**, the Minister of State in the MoEFCC (as Vice-Chairperson), 3 MPs, Secretary, MoEFCC.

Achievement of Project Tiger

➤ With a current population of **about 3,000 tigers**, India is home to more than **70% of the global tiger population**.

➤ While **Project Tiger** initially covered **nine tiger reserves**, India now has **53 reserves** covering approximately **2.4% of the country's geographical area**.

➤ **India achieved a doubling of tiger population in 2018**, 4 years ahead of the targeted year 2022.

TIGER PROTECTION STATUS



HIKE IN PRICES OF ESSENTIAL DRUGS, FORMULATIONS STINGS: INDIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (IMA)- TELANGANA

- According to the IMA Telangana the prices of **384 essential drugs and over 1,000 formulations would see a hike** of over 11% due to a sharp rise in Wholesale Price Index (WPI).
- **Regulation of prices of drugs in India**
 - Every few years, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare draws up a **National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM)**.
 - The NLEM was first formulated in 1996 and has been revised in 2003, 2011, and 2015 and 2022.
 - Medicines under NLEM **automatically come under price control under the Drug Price Control Order (DPCO), 2013**.
 - Also, the government has **special powers to bring any item** of medical necessity **under price controls**.
 - This provision was **used to regulate** the prices of **cardiac stents and knee implants**.
 - The DPCO follows a **market-based pricing mechanism** for fixing the ceiling price.
 - The ceiling price is allowed **an annual increase as per the Wholesale Price Index (WPI)**.
 - **However, for Non-scheduled medicine** while there is no price cap, a **price increase of 10% per annum is allowed**.
 - The **National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)** under the **Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers** enforces these prices and the availability of the medicines under the NLEM.

ABOUT CEILING PRICE

Ceiling price is worked out based on average price of all brands having at least 1% market share of total market turnover of that drug plus a notional 16% retailer's margin.

MINISTRY OF MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSME) IMPLEMENTS REVAMPED CREDIT GUARANTEE SCHEME FOR MICRO & SMALL ENTERPRISES (CGSME)

- It was launched in 2005 to make **available collateral-free loans to micro, small and medium enterprises**.
 - It also motivates **first generation entrepreneurs** towards self-employment by providing credit guarantee funding for third-party guarantee-free / collateral-free loans.
 - Lending institutions include **commercial banks, Regional Rural Banks, Scheduled Urban Co-operative Banks, Non Scheduled Urban Co-operative Banks, etc.**
- **Implementing Authority- Credit Guarantee Fund Trust**, established by Ministry of MSME and Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI).

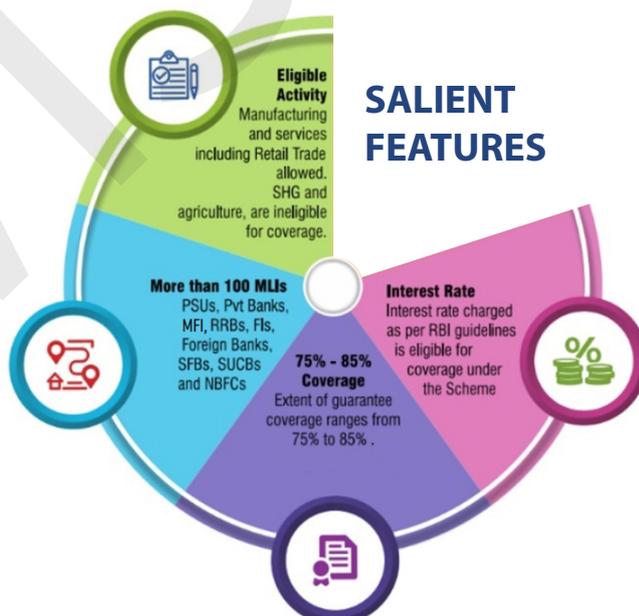
• Revamped Provisions:

- **Corpus of CGSME:** Has been infused with a sum of Rs. 8,000 crore.

- **Reduction of Annual guarantee:** Fee for loans upto Rs. 1 crore from a peak rate of 2% per annum to as low as 0.37% per annum.

- **Limit on ceiling for guarantees:** Has been enhanced from Rs. 2 crore to Rs. 5 crore.

- **Claim Settlement:** For settlement of claims in respect of guarantees for loan outstanding upto Rs. 10 lakh, initiation of legal proceedings will no longer be required.



ISRO SUCCESSFULLY CONDUCTS THE REUSABLE LAUNCH VEHICLE AUTONOMOUS LANDING MISSION (RLV LEX)

- RLV LEX test was the **second of five tests** that are a part of ISRO's efforts to develop RLVs or space planes/shuttles under the **Reusable Launch Vehicle Technology Demonstration (RLV-TD) Programme**.
 - RLV is essentially a **space plane with a low lift to drag ratio and can travel to low earth orbits to deliver payloads** and return to earth for use again.
 - This vehicle will be scaled up to become the **first stage of India's reusable two-stage orbital (TSTO) launch vehicle**.
- RLV-TD Programme aims at **developing essential technologies for a fully reusable launch vehicle** to enable low-cost access to space
 - It includes technologies like **hypersonic flight (HEX), autonomous landing (LEX), return flight experiment (REX), powered cruise flight, and Scramjet Propulsion Experiment (SPEX)**.
 - **NASA is using RLV for long time** and private space agencies such as Space X demonstrating partially reusable launch systems
- **Advantages:** RLV is considered a **low-cost, reliable, and on-demand mode of accessing space**.
- **Challenges:** **Selection of materials like special alloys, composites, and insulation materials** and the crafting of its parts is very **complex** and demands **highly skilled manpower**.

NEW FOREIGN TRADE POLICY (FTP) 2023 LAUNCHED BY THE DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF FOREIGN TRADE (DGFT), MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

- **New FTP 2023 replaced FTP (2015-20)**, which was extended due to COVID-19 pandemic and **volatile geo-political** scenario till 31.03.2023.
 - FTP is a **set of guidelines and instructions for matters** related to the **import and export** of goods.
- FTP 2023 **seeks to boost the country's exports to \$2 trillion by 2030** by shifting from incentives to remission and entitlement based regime.
 - **FTP 2023 will not have a five-year target date.**
- **Key Highlights**

Objective/Feature	Measures Proposed in Policy
Ease of doing business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automatic approval of various permissions, Reduction in user charges for MSMEs under Advance Authorizations (AA) and Export Promotion capital Goods Scheme (EPCG), etc.
Export promotion initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merchanting trade reform, Rupee payment to be accepted, Towns of Export Excellence etc.
Districts as Export Hubs initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity building at the district level, Infrastructure and logistics development intervention etc.
E-Commerce Exports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitation for E-Commerce exports, Dak Niryat facilitation centre and E-Commerce Export Hubs.
Steps to Boost Manufacturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prime Minister Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel Parks (PM MITRA) scheme brought under the CSP (Common Service Provider) Scheme of EPCG, Status House Certification extended for Fruits and vegetables etc.
Special one-time Amnesty Scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For exporters who are unable to fulfill their EO (Export Obligation) against the EPCG and AA.
Streamlining SCOMET (Special Chemicals, Organisms, Materials, Equipment and Technologies) Licensing Procedure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SCOMET policy emphasizes India's export control in line with its international commitments under various export control regimes (Wassenaar arrangement, Australia group and Missile Technology Control Regime).

ALSO IN NEWS

 <p>Advance Pricing Agreement (APA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2022-23, Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) created a milestone by entering into the highest ever Advance Pricing Agreements (APAs) in a year. • It is an agreement between a taxpayer and tax authority, determining the transfer pricing methodology for pricing the taxpayer's international transactions for future years. • It can be Unilateral, Bilateral APA (BAPA), or Multilateral APA (MAPA). • Income-tax Act, 1961 provides for APA. • Benefits: Avoids double taxation, certainty for complex and high risk transactions, reduces compliance costs, promotes ease of doing business etc.
 <p>Automated Testing Station (ATS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government has extended mandatory fitness testing through a registered ATS for heavy goods and passenger motor vehicles to October 1, 2024. • In 2022, fitness testing was made mandatory from April 1, 2023 under Central Motor Vehicle Rules 1989. • An ATS uses mechanical equipment to automate the various tests required to check the fitness of a vehicle. • Special purpose vehicles, state governments, etc. were allowed to open ATS for testing the fitness of both personal and transport vehicles.
 <p>National Logistics Portal Marine (NLPM)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways launched the Sagar Setu Mobile App of NLMP. • NLPM is a national maritime single window platform encompassing complete end-to-end logistics solutions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ It helps exporters, importers, and service providers exchange documents seamlessly and transact business.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The overarching NLP Marine Vision is to cater to various stakeholders in the G2G, G2B and B2B model. > It has the capability to integrate with various Port Operating Systems/ Terminal Operating Systems and other stakeholder(s) systems in the ecosystem.
 <p>Eravikulam National Park (ENP)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ENP has got its first fernarium. • About ENP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Location: Southern Western Ghats near Idukki, Kerala. > Vegetation: Grasslands, shrublands and Shola forests. > Highest peak: Anamudi at 2695 meters (also the highest peak of the Indian Peninsula). > Rivers: Tributaries of River Pambar in the east and tributaries of the River Periyar and Chalakuddy in the west > Fauna: The largest population of the endangered Nilgiri Tahr, other animals include Nilgiri Marten, Ruddy Mongoose, Small Clawed Otter, etc. > Flora: Neelakurunji (blooms only once every 12 years), Drosera peltate, etc.
 <p>Upward lightning or upward flashes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brazilian researchers recently succeeded in taking pictures of upward lightning. • Upward lightning is a phenomenon whereby a self-initiated lightning streak develops from a tall object that travels upward toward an overlaying electrified storm cloud. • For this to happen, storm electrification and the resulting presence of a cloud charge region are enabling factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The vertical elevation of a tall object accentuates the electric field locally on the ground. > This results in conditions favourable for the initiation of an upward streak (called a leader) from a tall object.
 <p>Leishmaniasis or kala-azar</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent work by the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science (IACS) has shown the potential of the quinoline derivatives to treat drug-resistant leishmaniasis or kala-azar (black fever). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The quinoline derivative is a potent inhibitor of enzyme topoisomerase 1, which is essential for maintenance of DNA architecture in the parasites. • Kala-azar is a vector borne (sandfly) neglected tropical disease caused by the protozoan parasites of the genus leishmania. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > More than 95% cases from India and other tropical countries. > The four States endemic for kala-azar in India are: Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Uttar Pradesh.
 <p>Nagri Dubraj rice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chhattisgarh's Nagri Dubraj rice variety got a geographical indication tag. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > After Jeeraphool rice in 2019, Dubraj is the second brand to get the GI tag. • The women's self-help group "Maa Durga Swasahayata Samuh" of Nagri in Dhamtari district has been harvesting Dubraj and had applied for the GI tag. • Features: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The Nagri Dubraj is known as the Basmati of Chhattisgarh because of its fragrance. > The grain finds reference in Valmiki Ramayana. > The rice is of an indigenous variety and has small grains.
 <p>Thiramahotsavam</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Poothan and Thira' is an ancient folk dance was performed during celebration of Thiramahotsavam in Thrissur district, Kerala. • Poothan and Thira are usually performed every year during the Pooram festival. • According to mythology, Thira and Poothan are the lieutenants of Lord Siva who were sent along with Goddess Kali to kill the demon king Darika. • After slaying the demon, Thira and Poothan danced along with Kali to celebrate their victory. • The dancers belong to Mannan and Perumannan communities. • The main musical instrument used is Para (a percussion instrument).