

Current Affairs of the Day

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1. At 2,967 tigers, India's capacity at peak



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Tigers Co-predators and Prey report:

- A summary of the report “**Tigers Co-predators and Prey**” was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi last July. While a detailed report was to have been readied by last December, it has only been publicly released on Tuesday.

Key findings:

- Nearly a third of India's tigers are living outside tiger reserves and nearly 17 of the 50 reserves are approaching the peak of their capacity at sustaining their populations. India hosts 70% of the world's tigers.
- At 2,967, experts say, India may slowly be approaching its peak carrying capacity of tigers. For the first time, said a scientist associated with the survey, there was an attempt to segregate how many tigers were largely present within the reserves and how many flitted in and out and were dependent on the core reserve for sustenance. This was to guide conservation policy.
- The reserves, by definition, are a “source” and suitable for nourishing a growing tiger population because of prey availability and territory.
- However, when they get too crowded, tigers venture out further from “sources” and form “sinks” and much of wildlife population dynamics is about understanding this source-sink relationship.
- In the tiger reserves in Uttar Pradesh, there were several more tigers that depended on the source but lived outside it. In Corbett, there were 231 tigers within the reserves, but 266 were ‘utilising it.’ Kanha in Madhya Pradesh had 88 inside and 108 dependent on it. The Pench reserve in Maharashtra had 53 inside but 82 utilising them.
- These estimates were based on tigers photographed via camera traps .



‘Notification on 74% FDI in defence soon’

- The government is going to come out with a decision on 74% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in defence and a notification is likely in the next few days.
- Separately, the Defence Ministry said the second draft of the **Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) 2020**, now renamed as the **Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020**, was put out in public domain on Tuesday for comments from stakeholders and public.
- In May, the government announced a series of measures to promote domestic defence manufacturing. These include a negative import list, separate budgetary allocation for domestic procurements, indigenisation of spares and components and raising the FDI cap through automatic route from 49% to 74%
- The increase in exports by the private sector comes as several major defence companies like Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Thales and Dassault Aviation are increasingly sourcing components from India for their global supply chains. For instance, all C-130 transport aircraft manufactured by Lockheed Martin have components sourced from their joint venture with Tata group in Hyderabad.

Value Added Information

Defence Procurement Procedure, 2020:

- Raksha Mantri unveiled the draft Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) 2020 that aims at further increasing indigenous manufacturing and reducing timelines for procurement of defence equipment.

What is Defence Procurement Procedure?

- The draft of DPP 2020 has been prepared by a Review Committee headed by Director General (Acquisition) based on the recommendations of all stakeholders, including private industry.
- The first DPP was promulgated in 2002 and has since been revised a number of times to provide impetus to the growing domestic industry and achieve enhanced self-reliance in defence manufacturing.



Features:

- The government is constantly striving to formulate policies to empower the private industry including MSMEs in order to develop the eco-system for indigenous defence production.
- The major changes proposed in the new DPP are:

1) Indigenous Content ratio hiked

- The draft proposes increasing the Indigenous Content (IC) stipulated in various categories of procurement by about 10% to support the 'Make in India' initiative.
- A simple and realistic methodology has been incorporated for verification of indigenous content for the first time.

2) New Category: "Buy Global" Manufacture in India

- It has been introduced with minimum 50% indigenous content on cost basis of total contract value.
- Only the minimum necessary will be bought from abroad while the balance quantities will be manufactured in India.
- This would be in preference to the 'Buy Global' category as manufacturing will happen in India and jobs will be created in the country.

3) Leasing introduced as a new category

- Leasing has been introduced as a new category for acquisition in addition to existing 'Buy' & 'Make' categories to substitute huge initial capital outlays with periodical rental payments.
- Leasing is permitted under two categories e, Lease (Indian) where Lessor is an Indian entity and is the owner of the assets and Lease (Global) where Lessor is a Global entity.
- This will be useful for military equipment not used in actual warfare like transport fleets, trainers, simulators, etc.



4) Product support

- The scope and options for Product Support have been widened to include contemporary concepts in vogue, namely Performance Based Logistics (PBL), Life Cycle Support Contract (LCSC), Comprehensive Maintenance Contract (CMC), etc. to optimize life cycle support for equipment.
- The capital acquisition contract would normally also include support for five years beyond the warranty period.

Working with India to make clean power accessible: U.K. Minister

- The United Kingdom, which holds the Presidency of the next **UN Climate Change Conference, COP26**, planned for next year, is committed to building resilience to climate change among communities and working with India on clean energy, Lord Ahmad, U.K. Minister of State (Minister for South Asia and the Commonwealth), said.
- Lord Ahmad, who was on a virtual visit to India, said green finance was high on the agenda.
- “The **Green Growth Equity Fund (GGEF)** with the U.K. and the Indian government co-investment of £240 million, is starting to mobilise private investment. BP [the oil and gas major] recently committed over £55 million (\$70 million) towards this,” he said.
- “India matters to us. From the strength of the Indian diaspora, I know also that Britain-Indian relations matter to us. I believe it is important to strengthen the partnership on a whole raft of issues,” Lord Ahmad said. “Last week I was engaging directly with the new Indian ambassador to the United Nations. We look forward to working in the multilateral sphere and within the Commonwealth sphere.”

Crucial linkages:

- Lord Ahmad said as progress was made with the (COVID-19) Oxford vaccine in the U.K., the relationship through the private contract agreed with Astra Zeneca and the Serum Institute (of India) on production of the vaccine was notable. At a time of crisis, India and the U.K. could work collaboratively.



- “Due to the pandemic, we had to delay COP26. India has a lot of expertise on solar energy and we on wind energy. The relationship with India is a pivotal one,” he observed. COP26 should be profiling good practice, Lord Ahmad said.
- Earlier this month, we announced a new green recovery package, including a £3 billion investment to create green jobs and upgrade buildings. Over £1 billion would go to make buildings, including schools and hospitals, greener,” he said. A common commitment to move to cleaner fuels was necessary, although the pace at which this could be done would vary by country.

Boosting renewables:

- The U.K. had contributed analysis and market simulations for India’s Real-Time Power Market which launched on June 1, to get more renewables on the national grid at more competitive rates.
- Lord Ahmad said India’s momentum on climate action, despite the current crisis, including a solar auction on 30 June which set a record low tariff was impressive. In March, the U.K. was confirmed as the first co-chair of the Governing Council of the global **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)**.
- The Coalition is an India-led initiative to upgrade infrastructure from design, construction, operation and maintenance perspectives, and make renewable energy accessible and affordable.
- The U.K. would strengthen its collaboration, in areas such as increased use of renewable energy by Indian Railways to help it become a net zero carbon emitter by 2030.
- The Minister said the U.K. recognised that air pollution was one of the biggest threats to public health and the government had announced its ambitious clean air strategy last year, which would cut the costs of air pollution to society by £1.7 billion every year in 2020, rising to £5.3 billion every year from 2030.
- Britain was working with Indian partners on a clean energy transition. The U.K. Department for International Development (DFID) power sector reform aimed at making utilities cleaner, smarter and more efficient. UKRI research partnerships would help develop the next generation of solar buildings and



through the Newton–Bhabha fund, Catapult innovation centres were partnering institutions in Bangalore to develop electric mobility and air pollution solutions.

- Asked about the British partnership in flood protection and aquifer recharge under the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA)**, Lord Ahmad said, “We are working together through the MGNREGA to build climate resilient livelihoods”.
- This focused on drought proofing, flood defences and river structures for aquifer replenishment. The **Infrastructure for Climate Resilient Growth (ICRG)** has invested in climate-resilient livelihood strategies in Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Bihar. Also, India’s Ministry of Earth Sciences was collaborating to harness land, sea and atmospheric data to aid monsoon forecasting.
- The GGEF first investment in India had gone to Ayana Renewable Power, with a target of 6 GW in 5 years. The Fund has also invested in e-mobility and integrated waste management.

Leading solar alliance:

- India was demonstrating leadership with the **International Solar Alliance** and the U.K. was working with it and other countries to mobilise more than \$1 trillion of investments in solar energy by 2030.
- Separately, the U.K. was supporting a £40 million programme for technology advancement and market development of electric cooking, using solar and other energy sources. This programme, in operation in 15 ISA member-countries, was now establishing itself in India.
- Within the context of the Commonwealth, India could offer its experience to small island states, such as tiny Vanuatu, facing climate change impacts.
- Lord Ahmad’s visit was preceded by an announcement of a joint collaborative programme on **anti-microbial resistance (AMR) in India**. The research aimed to develop a better understanding of how waste from antimicrobial manufacturing in India could be fuelling AMR. The five projects were planned for September 2020 and the U.K. was contributing £4 million from the U.K. Research and Innovation Fund for International Collaboration, and India was matching this, for a total of £8 million.



Govt. notifies 100% FDI in Air India for NRIs

- In a move that is likely to have an impact on the sale of the national carrier, the government has notified amendments to Foreign Exchange Management rules and allowed NRIs 100% foreign direct investment (FDI) in Air India.
- The gazette notification follows a Cabinet nod for the same in March this year.
- The amendment removes the exception which permitted Overseas Citizens of India 100% FDI in air transport, but not Air India. This category of citizens has been replaced with NRIs, now allowed to commit 100% FDI in air transport, including Air India, through automatic route.
- “Foreign investments in m/s Air India Limited, including that of foreign airlines shall not exceed 49% either directly or indirectly except in case of those NRIs, who are Indian nationals, where foreign investments is permitted up to 100% under automatic route,” according to the notification on the third amendment to FEMA (non-debt instruments) Rules, 2020.