

2. Procurement of weapons worth ₹22,800 crore

Prelims Level: Science & Technology

Mains Level: GS-III Science and Technology - developments and their applications and effects in everyday life Achievements of Indians in Science & Technology; Indigenization of Technology and Developing New Technology.

Why in News?

- The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, has approved the procurement of weapons and equipment worth ₹22,800 crore.

About DAC:

- The DAC is Defence Ministry's highest decision-making body for capital acquisition proposals forwarded by the Indian armed forces.
- It was set up in 2001 as part of the post-Kargil reforms in defence sector which is headed by the Defence Minister.
- It approves the long-term integrated perspective plan for the forces, accords acceptance of necessity (AON) to begin acquisition proposals, and grant's its approval to all major deals through all their important phases.
- It also has the power to approve any deviations in an acquisition, and recommends all big capital defence purchases for approval of the Cabinet committee on security (CCS) headed by Prime Minister.

Functions of DAC:

- In principle approval of 15 Years Long Terms Integrated Perspective Plan for Defence Force.
- Accord of Acceptance of Necessity to acquisition proposals.
- Categorization of the acquisition proposals relating to 'Buy', 'Buy & Make' and 'Make'.
- Issues relating to Single vendor clearance.
- Decisions regarding 'offset' provisions in respect of acquisition proposals above Rs. 300 crore.
- Decisions regarding Transfer of Technology under 'Buy & Make' category of acquisition proposals.
- **Field Trial evaluation.**

What kind of Weapons is procured?

- Six additional P-8I long-range patrol aircraft is to be procured from the U.S. for the Navy and additional indigenous Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft for the Indian Air Force (IAF).

About AWACS:

- AWACS stands for Airborne Warning and Control System that helps the Air Force detect incoming missiles and enemy aircraft from across the country's border.
- AWACS is described as an 'Eye in the Sky' as it can carry out surveillance at about 400-km range under all-weather situations, and to lock on to lock on to 60 targets at a time simultaneously.
- They are capable of detecting hostile aircraft, cruise missiles and other incoming aerial threat far before ground-based radars.
- It is basically an aircraft fitted with sophisticated radar and can be said to be radar on the move. It can provide advance warning about enemy's intrusion into country's air space.
- It can also track and attack enemy's targets in air. India has an agreement with Israel for supply of its AWACS called Phalcon.

Why it is Needed?

- As a follow-up to the successful indigenous Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) programme, the DAC revalidated the Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for the procurement of additional AWACS aircraft.
- "The mission system and sub-systems for these aircraft would be indigenously designed, developed and integrated into the main platform by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)."
- The IAF now operates three Israeli Phalcon AWACS and three smaller indigenous Netra AEW&C systems mounted on Embraer aircraft.
- A shortage of these force multipliers was felt during the aerial engagement with the Pakistan Air Force, a day after the Balakot air strike in February.
- These platforms would provide on-board command and control and 'early warning', which would assist the IAF in achieving effective air space dominance in the least possible time, the statement said. The new systems are likely to be mounted on Airbus Aircraft.