

Daily Current Affairs 15/12/2021

1. Three Indian companies among top 100 in arms sales globally: SIPRI Report



Why in News

- **Three Indian companies** are among the world's top 100 for combined arms sales in 2020, according to a new report by the **Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)**.
- The three are: **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)**, **Indian Ordnance Factories** and **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL)**.

Note: The three were ranked among the top 100 in arms sales in 2019 as well.

Key Points

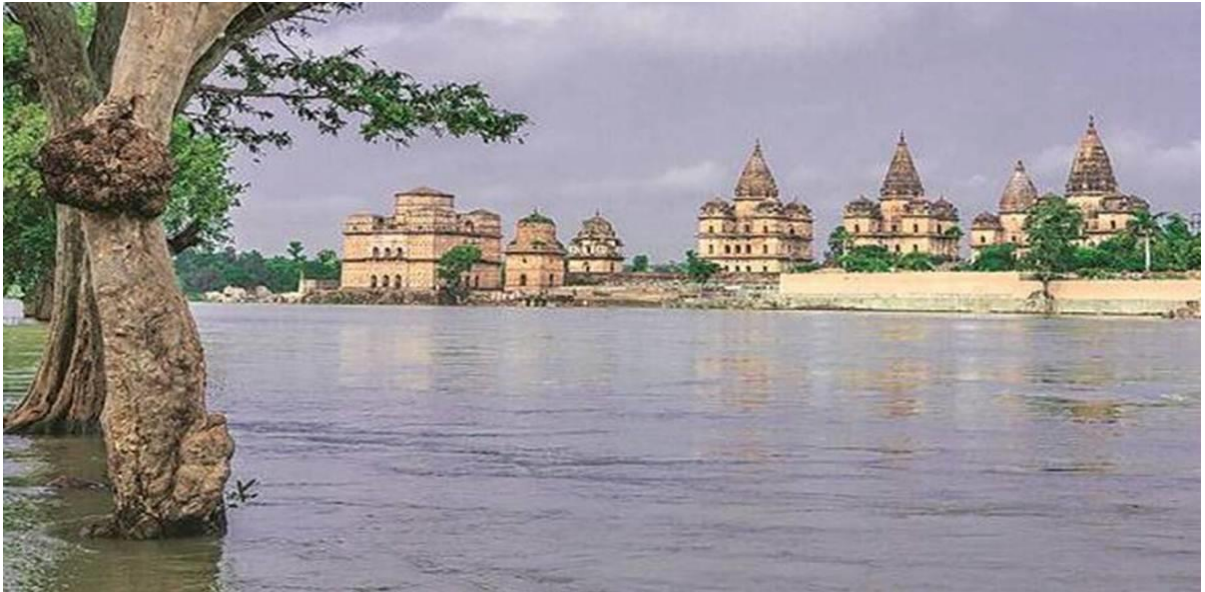
- In the latest rankings, **HAL** is at number 42 with US\$ 2.97 billion, up 1.5 percent from 2019 sales.
- **Indian Ordnance Factories** are at the 60th spot, with US\$ 1.9 billion in sales, up 0.2 percent from the previous year.
- **BEL** is ranked 66, with US\$ 1.63 billion in arms sales, up 4 percent compared to 2019.
- India's share of arms sales globally in 2020 was 1.2 percent.

Top Countries:

- With 41 arms companies, the **USA** has the highest number of companies in the top 100 worldwide. Together, their arms sales amounted to \$285 billion, an increase of 1.9 percent compared with 2019.
- China was second at 13 percent, followed by the UK at 7.1 percent.

Source: Indian Express

2. Cabinet approves Ken-Betwa Interlinking of Rivers Project



Why in News

- The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved the funding and implementation of **Ken-Betwa Inter-Linking of Rivers Project**.

Key Points

- The total cost of Ken-Betwa link project has been assessed at Rs.44,605 crore at 2020-21 price levels.
- This project involves transfer of water from the Ken to the Betwa River through the construction of Daudhan Dam and a canal linking the two rivers, the Lower Orr Project, Kotha Barrage -and Bina Complex Multipurpose Project.
- The project will provide an annual irrigation of 10.62 lakh ha, drinking water supply to a population of about 62 lakhs and also generate 103 MW of hydropower and 27 MW solar power.
- The Project is proposed to be implemented in 8 years with state of the art technology.
- The Project will be of immense benefit to the water starved Bundelkhand region, spread across the states of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.
- This project will provide enormous benefits to the districts of Panna, Tikamgarh, Chhatarpur, Sagar, Damoh, Datia, Vidisha, Shivpuri and Raisen of Madhya Pradesh and Banda, Mahoba, Jhansi & Lalitpur of Uttar Pradesh.

Background:

- On 22nd March 2021, a historic agreement was signed between the Union Minister of Jal Shakti and the Chief Ministers of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh to implement the first major centrally driven river interlinking project in the country.

Note:

- Ken and Betwa Rivers originate in Madhya Pradesh and are the tributaries of Yamuna.
- Ken meets with Yamuna in Banda district of Uttar Pradesh and with Betwa in Hamirpur district of Uttar Pradesh.
- Rajghat, Paricha and Matatila dams are over Betwa River.
- Ken River passes through Panna tiger reserve.

Source: PIB

3. United Nations grants observer status to International Solar Alliance



Why in News

- The **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** has granted Observer status to the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**.
- This is going to give impetus to “One Sun One world One Grid “. This will help in bringing equitable energy solutions to the world.

Key Points

- This would immensely help towards achieving the goal of net-zero carbon emissions through global co-operations.

Note:

- The fourth general assembly of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) was held in October 2021.
- A total of 108 countries participated in the Assembly, including 74 Member Countries and 34 Observer and Prospective Countries, 23 Partner Organizations and 33 Special Invitee Organisations.

About International Solar Alliance (ISA):

- The launch of the ISA was announced by Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India and Francois Hollande, former President of France on 30th November 2015, at the 21st session of United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP-21) in Paris, France.
- The U.S. became the 101st country to sign the framework agreement of the ISA.
- **Headquarters:** Gurugram, Haryana, India
- **Founded:** 30 November 2015
- **Director General:** Ajay Mathur

Source: Business Standard

4. Launch of the Resource Book on Springshed Management in the Indian Himalayan Region by NITI Aayog



Why in News

- The **Resource Book on Springshed Management** in the Indian Himalayan Region was released by **NITI Aayog**.
- This Resource Book is a summarised guiding document on best practices in springshed management developed by NITI Aayog in collaboration with IWMI and SDC under the “Strengthening Climate Change Adaptation in Himalayas (SCA-Himalayas)” project.

Key Points

- This resource book offers practical guidance on revival and conservation of mountain springs.
- The resource book is an easy-to-use document building upon the processes, methods, and learnings from more than a decade of spring revival efforts by various agencies in the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) and neighbouring Nepal and Bhutan.

Note:

- Springs are the primary water source for over 90% of rural communities in the IHR.
- However, there has been increasing concern over the decline of springs and the larger Himalayan groundwater systems, which threatens the water security of the hill populations and the entire Indo-Gangetic plains.

Source: PIB

5. NDPS (Amendment) Bill, 2021



Why in News

- A Bill to replace an ordinance amending the **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (NDPS), 1985** was introduced in the Lok Sabha.

Key Points

- The **NDPS (Amendment) Bill, 2021** would replace an ordinance promulgated in September 2021 to correct a drafting error in a 2014 amendment to the Act.
- Before the 2014 amendment, clause (viii-a) of Section 2 contained sub-clauses (i) to (v), which defined the term “illicit traffic”.

About Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985:

- The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, commonly referred to as the NDPS Act, is an Act of the Parliament of India that prohibits a person the production/manufacturing/cultivation, possession, sale, purchasing, transport, storage, and/or consumption of any narcotic drug or psychotropic substance.

Initiatives to Tackle Drug Addiction:

- Narco-Coordination Centre
- Seizure Information Management System
- National Drug Abuse Survey
- Nasha Mukh Bharat

Source: The Hindu

6. Launch of All India EdTech Challenge and Master Class Series 2021-2022 by Atal Innovation Mission



Why in News

- **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)**, Amazon Web Services (AWS) and the Global EdTech Accelerator - UIncept have joined hands to organise the '**All India EdTech Challenge and Master Class Series**' for early and advanced stage EdTech founders.
- This initiative is an extension to the Statement of Intent (SoI) signed between NITI Aayog and Amazon Internet Services Private Limited (AISPL) in March, 2021.

Key Points

- This initiative aims to nurture EdTech companies and startups who are in pre and post minimum viable product (MVP) stages by identifying potential industry gaps, exploring mergers and acquisitions, talent sourcing and pooling, and decoding venture capital and investor mind-set while exploring industry, academia and government connections.

About Partners:



- The **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)** is the Government of India's flagship initiative to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country. AIM is mandated to create an umbrella structure to oversee the innovation ecosystem of the country and revolutionize the innovation ecosystem - touching upon the entire innovation life cycle through various programs like Atal Tinkering Labs, Atal Incubation Centres, Atal Community Innovation Centres, ARISE and Atal New India Challenge.
- **Uncept Global EdTech Accelerator** is a robust ecosystem of startup stakeholder: Startups, Expert Mentors, Investors, Corporates, School, Colleges, Government, Policy makers etc.
- **Amazon Internet Services Private Limited (AISPL)** undertakes the resale and marketing of AWS cloud services in India.

Source: PIB

7. NITI Aayog and Bharti Foundation announce the launch of 'Convoke 2021-22'



Why in News

- **NITI Aayog** in partnership with Bharti Foundation, the philanthropic arm of **Bharti Enterprises**, launched '**Convoke 2021-22**'.

Key Points

- **Convoke** is a National research Symposium which aims at addressing challenges in imparting education and strengthening its quality with special focus on all teachers, educationists, heads of schools across India.
- Through this platform, **School Teachers/ Heads/Principals of Government Schools** and teachers from Bharti Foundation network will be encouraged to

use research-based solutions through scientific approach, and showcase their efforts taken at the grass-root level in improving learning outcomes.

- It will promote the suggestions of the National Education Policy 2020 on recognizing novel approaches to teaching that improve learning outcomes in their classrooms.

Source: PIB

8. 2021 DST-ICTP-IMU Ramanujan Prize



Why in News

- Professor **Neena Gupta**, a mathematician at the Indian Statistical Institute in Kolkata, has been awarded the **2021 DST-ICTP-IMU Ramanujan Prize** for Young Mathematicians from developing countries for her outstanding work in affine algebraic geometry and commutative algebra.

Key Points

- Professor Gupta is the third woman to receive the Ramanujan Prize, which was first awarded in 2005 and is administered by the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) jointly with the Department of Science and Technology (DST) Government of India and the International Mathematical Union (IMU).
- **Ramanujan Prize** is given annually to an eminent Mathematician who is less than 45 years of age on 31 December of the year of the award and has conducted outstanding research in developing countries.

Source: PIB

9. Senior BJP leader Harbans Kapoor passes away



- Eight-time MLA and senior BJP leader of Uttarakhand, **Harbans Kapoor** passed away.
- A former Speaker of Uttarakhand assembly from 2007 to 2012, Kapoor has held a ministerial post in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

Source: TOI